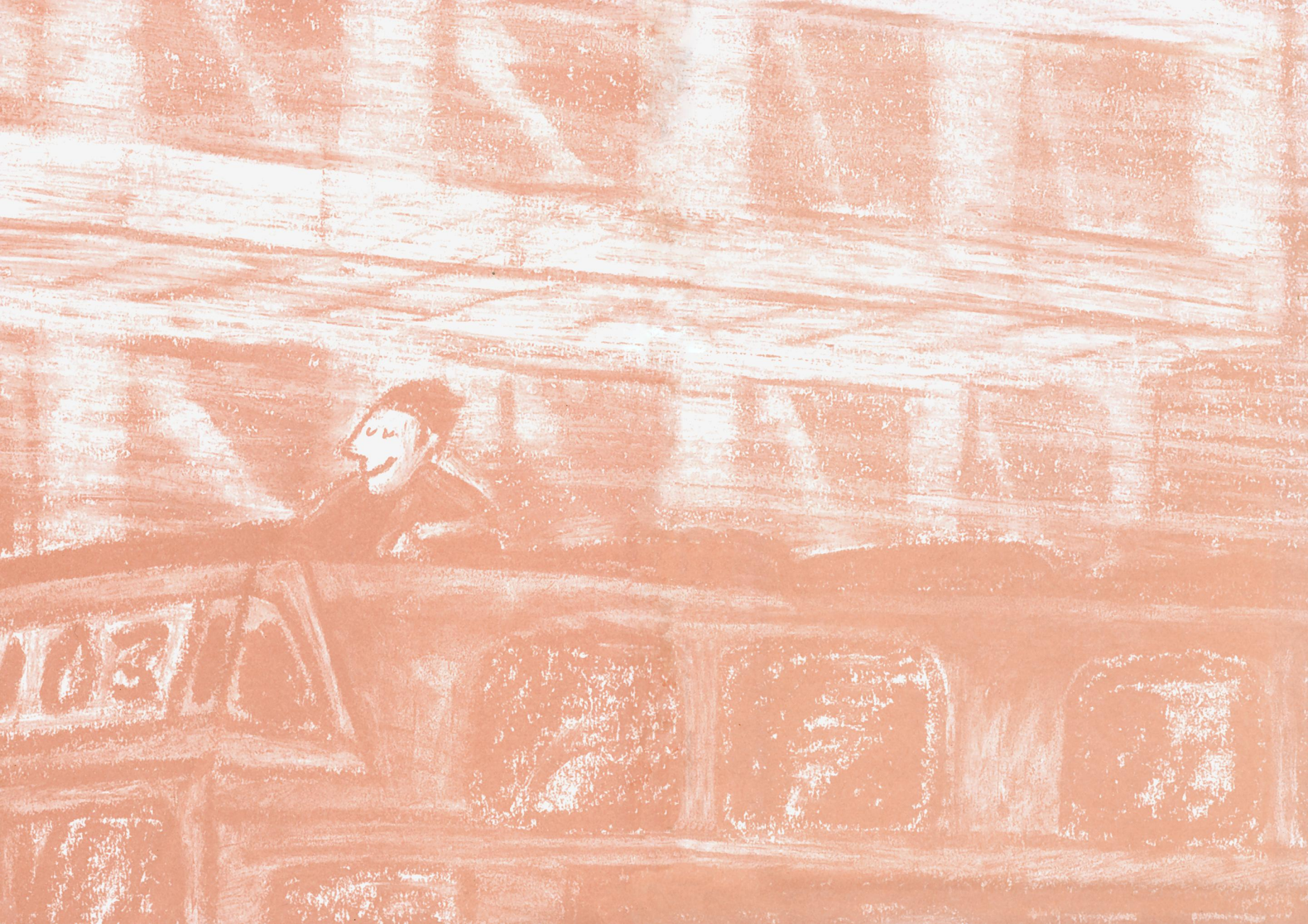


GUY DELISLE
SHENZHEN
A TRAVELOGUE FROM CHINA





SHENZHEN

A TRAVELOGUE FROM CHINA

GUY DELISLE



DRAWN & QUARTERLY BOOKS
MONTRÉAL

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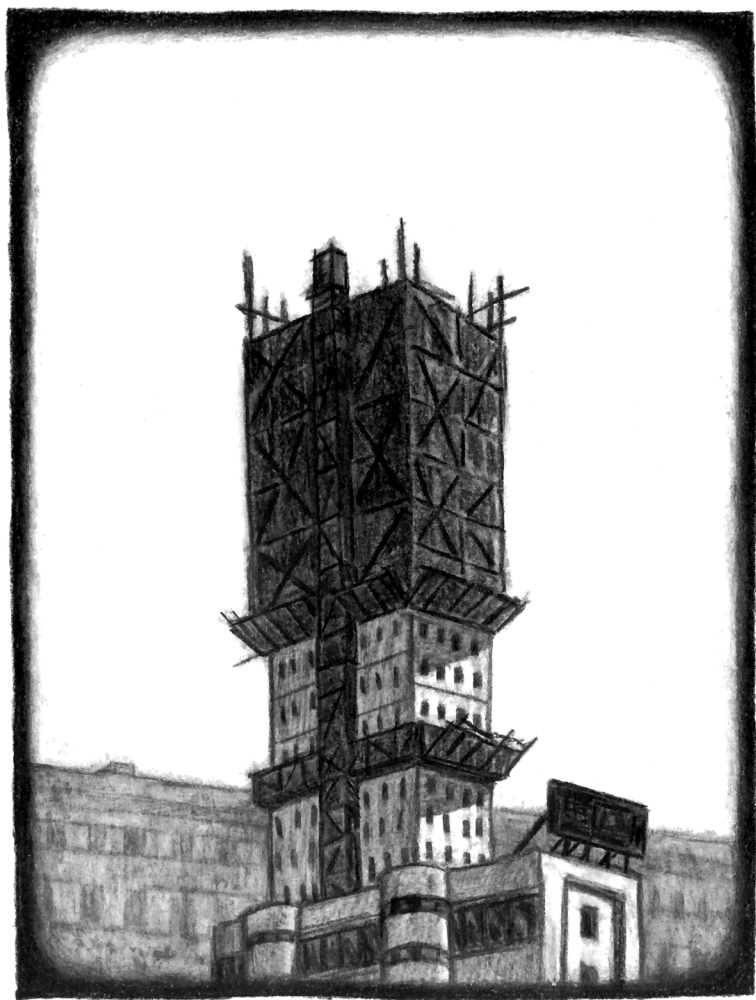
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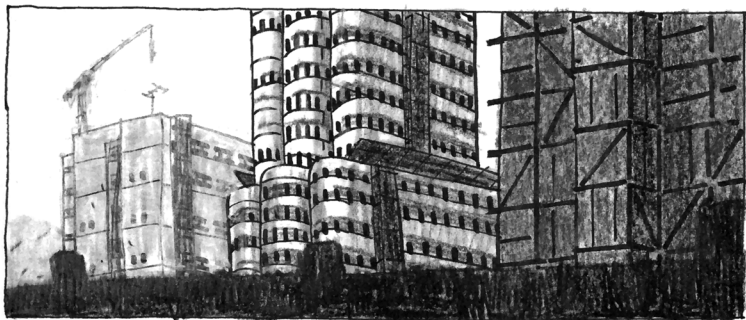
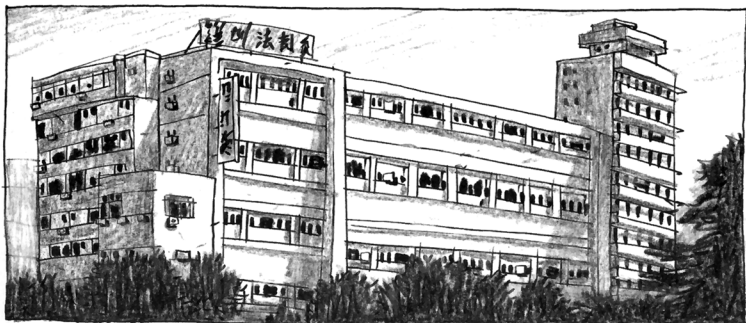
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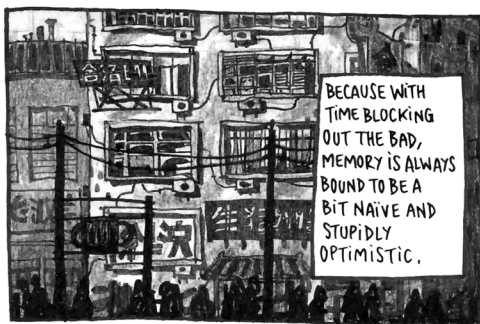




I REDISCOVER WHAT I'D FORGOTTEN: THE SMELLS, THE NOISE, THE CROWDS, THE DIRT EVERYWHERE.



I REALIZE THAT I'D REMEMBERED ONLY THE GOOD THINGS... HOW EXOTIC IT WAS...





IN FACT, THERE IS ONLY ONE KIND OF HOTEL ROOM IN CHINA...



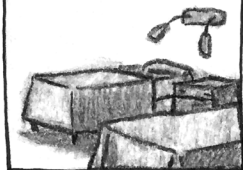
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Nanjing.



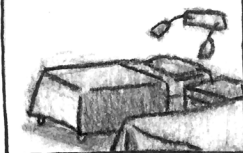
Great Wall Hotel,
ShenZhen.



Holiday Inn,
Canton.



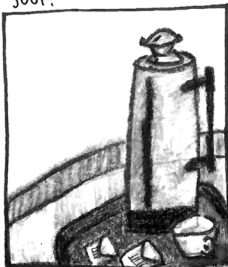
Oriental Regent,
Shanghai.



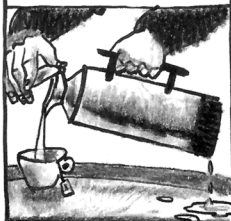
Victoria Hotel
Canton.



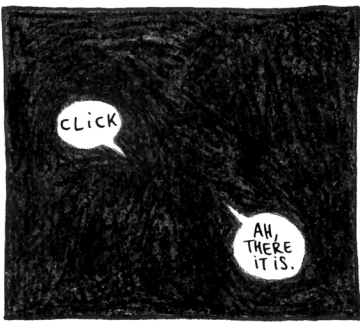
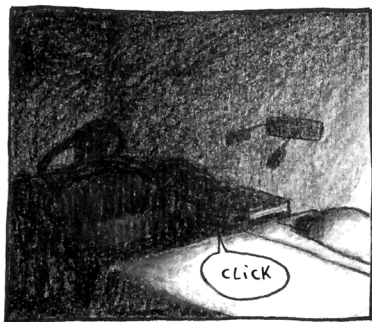
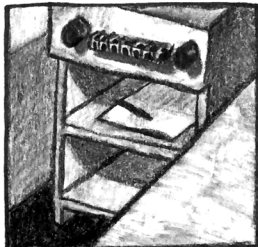
HOT WATER FOR TEA OR SOUP.



THE SPOUT IS BADLY DESIGNED, SO WATER DRIBBLES EVERYWHERE.



AND ALWAYS, A PANEL OF BUTTONS BETWEEN THE TWO BEDS TO CONTROL YOUR LITTLE UNIVERSE.



ON THE FIRST MORNING, I HAVE TO GET TO THE STUDIO TO MEET THE DIRECTOR I'LL BE REPLACING.



I ORDER A COFFEE AT THE HOTEL BAR.
\$ 3.50...



I ASK FOR A DOUBLE TO GET OVER THE JET LAG.



AFTER 8 MONTHS, THE DIRECTOR HAS PRETTY MUCH HAD IT. HE CAN'T WAIT TO CLEAR OUT.

JESUS H. CHRIST!
I'VE BEEN TELLING THEM FROM THE START NOT TO MOVE THE PUPIL WHEN THEY DO BLINKS!

AND THE ANIMATION IS GETTING WORSE BY THE DAY. THE BEST GUYS TOOK OFF TO A STUDIO IN CANTON.

THIS STUDIO IS A FRIGGIN' HOLE!

AND YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT THE BOSS...

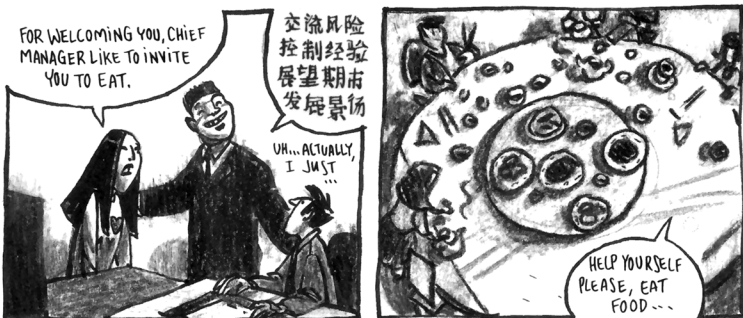
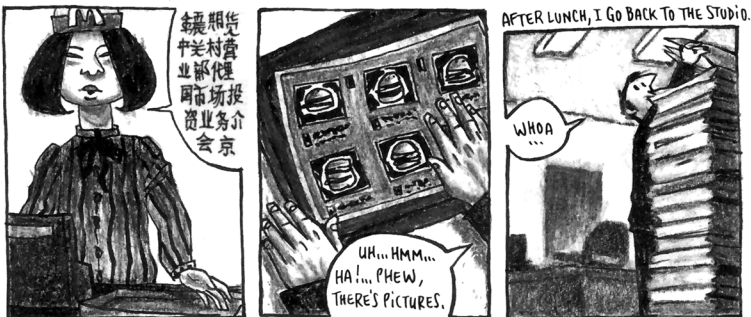
EVE-RY SEQUENCE HAS GOTTA BE REDONE 2 OR 3 TIMES

THE TRANSLATOR IS DEPRESSING AS ALL HELL, PLUS SHE DOESN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT ANIMATION...

AND THE NEW LAYOUTS FROM CANADA ARE TOTAL CRAP ...

THEY'RE GONNA REDO THIS!

SEE THIS? IT SUCKS!





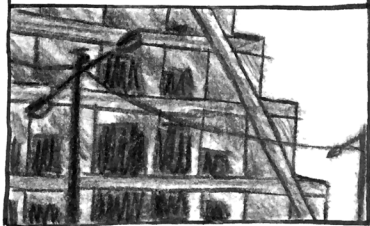
FOR A MODERN CITY NEXT TO HONG KONG, SHENZHEN HAS VERY FEW BILINGUAL CHINESE...

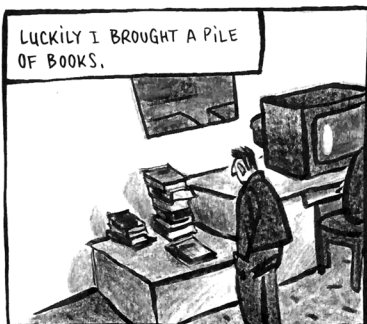


THERE'S NO UNIVERSITY OR CAFÉ FOR ME TO MEET YOUNG PEOPLE INTERESTED IN THE WEST.



PEOPLE COME HERE TO DO BUSINESS. AFTER A DAY OR TWO OF MEETINGS, THEY HEAD BACK TO HONG KONG.





Until then,
keep your chin up,
forget your sensitivities
and observe people,
especially those nearest you.
You'll enjoy it.
I guarantee that you're in
for a pleasant surprise.

from the novel *Carrot Top*
by Jules Renard



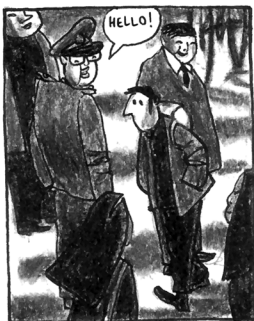
ONE DAY OVER LUNCH, I TRY TO
GET TO KNOW MY TRANSLATOR.



AFTER THE MEAL, SHE COVERS
HER MOUTH WITH ONE HAND WHILE
USING HER
TOOTHPICK.

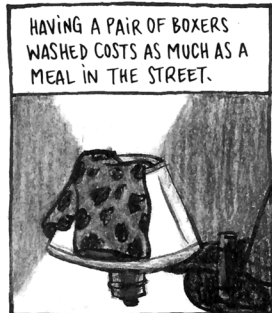


SHE DIDN'T ASK A SINGLE QUESTION ALL THROUGH THE MEAL. I WAS MORE INQUISITIVE AND TRIED TO LIVE THINGS UP.





WEEKS LATER, I REALIZE IT'S THE HOTEL LAUNDRY SERVICE.



HOTEL FOOD IS MORE EXPENSIVE, OF COURSE, BUT YOU GET SERVICE (TOO MUCH FOR MY TASTE). IN GENERAL, THE MORE WAITRESSES THERE ARE, THE CLASSIER THE PLACE.



AFTER EVERY SIP, MY CUP GETS A REFILL. THE CONSTANT ATTENTION IS DISTRACTING AT FIRST, BUT YOU LEARN TO IGNORE IT. BECOMING BOURGEOIS MUST START LIKE THIS.



Hmm...
THE TEA
ISN'T BAD...
OOLONG,
IF I'M
NOT
MISTAKEN
...



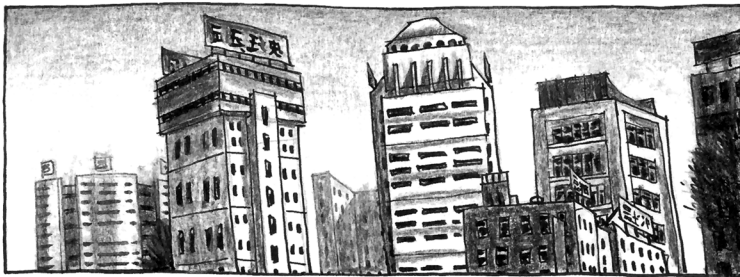
HOW
DO YOU
DO?

EXCEPT THE GUY AT THE RESTROOM DOOR. I NEVER DID GET USED TO HIM.

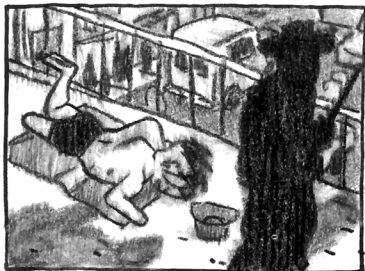
ON MY WAY DOWNTOWN TO THE BANK, I NOTICE A STRANGE BUILDING, SOME 15 STORIES HIGH WITH NO WINDOWS. A LARGE GRAY CONCRETE SLAB. BIZARRE.



DURING MY STAY, I LOOKED FOR THE STRANGE CUBE A FEW TIMES TO PHOTOGRAPH IT, BUT I NEVER FOUND IT AGAIN... IT HAD VANISHED.



IN THE CITY STREETS, CRIPPLES BEG BY KNOCKING
THEIR FOREHEADS ON THE GROUND.



ACTUALLY, THEY'RE FAKING. THEY STOP BEFORE
HITTING THE PAVEMENT, BUT WITH THEIR LONG
HAIR YOU CAN'T TELL.



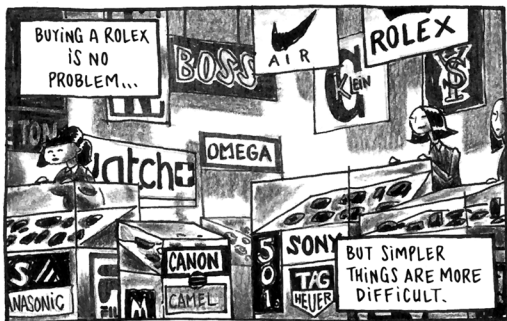
IF THEY WERE HITTING THE GROUND, YOU'D HEAR
SOMETHING... BUT YOU DON'T.



OPPOSITE A
CHEVIGNON
STORE.

SHOPPING IS THE MAIN
PASTIME HERE. IN FACT,
IT'S THE ONLY PASTIME.

STRANGELY ENOUGH, ALL
YOU SEE ARE BRAND
NAMES, AND THEY'RE NOT
CHEAPER HERE THAN
ANYWHERE ELSE.



BUYING A ROLEX
IS NO
PROBLEM...

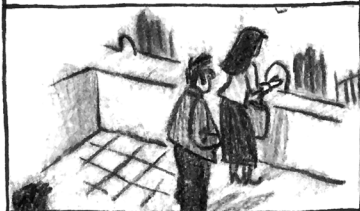
BUT SIMPLER
THINGS ARE MORE
DIFFICULT.

IT TOOK ME THREE DAYS TO
FIND A STORE SELLING KITCHEN
KNIVES SO I COULD CUT MY
APPLES AT THE HOTEL.



AT THE BANK

STANDING IN LINE IS NOT A CLEAR CONCEPT IN CHINA. LEAVE A SPACE AND IT'S LIKELY TO BE FILLED.



EVEN THE SMALLEST SPACE.



THE TELLER CLIPS TOGETHER MY PASSPORT, THE CASH AND A RECEIPT... AND BING!



A LITTLE RUBBER STAMP...

AND THERE... I GET MY MONEY.



THE TELLER USES A CANDY BOX FOR SMALL CHANGE.



NEXT TO ME, A GIRL PULLS BUNDLES OF BILLS OUT OF HER BAG!



AND I'D WORRIED ABOUT WALKING AROUND WITH A WAD OF CASH IN MY WALLET...



FOR THE OPENING OF A KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN OUTLET, YOUNG UNIFORMED EMPLOYEES DO A LITTLE PROMOTIONAL DANCE NUMBER THAT HAS A MILITARY FEEL TO IT.





THAT EVENING, THE STUDIO'S ANIMATION DIRECTOR AND HIS BROTHER INVITE ME TO THE HARD ROCK CAFE FOR WESTERN FOOD.



WHERE I'M FROM:
"YCHANA DA"

IT'S VERY COLD.

CANADA
USA
"CANADA BIGGER THAN CHINA"
"NO CHINA BIGGER"



CANTON?

DO YOU LIVE IN CANTON?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. IT LOOKS LIKE A SOCCER BALL, NOT A CITY.

OH, THAT'S IT!

I SEE

CANTONA?

YUP, IT'S "CAN-TO-NA". THEY'RE SOCCER FANS AND THEY WANT TO TALK WORLD CUP.



I ADD A SHADOW.

WHERE THEY WANT TO GO

MAN-NAN-TAN

NY

"VERY BIG"

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

CHINA

HONG KONG

"PA-LI"
YES, PARIS.

"VERY BEAUTIFUL"

THE EIFFEL TOWER ...

FRANCE

WHERE I LIVE NOW

"MA-SEI"
THAT'S RIGHT, NEXT TO MARSEILLES.

I DRAW IT AGAIN



WHERE THEY LIVE BEIJING



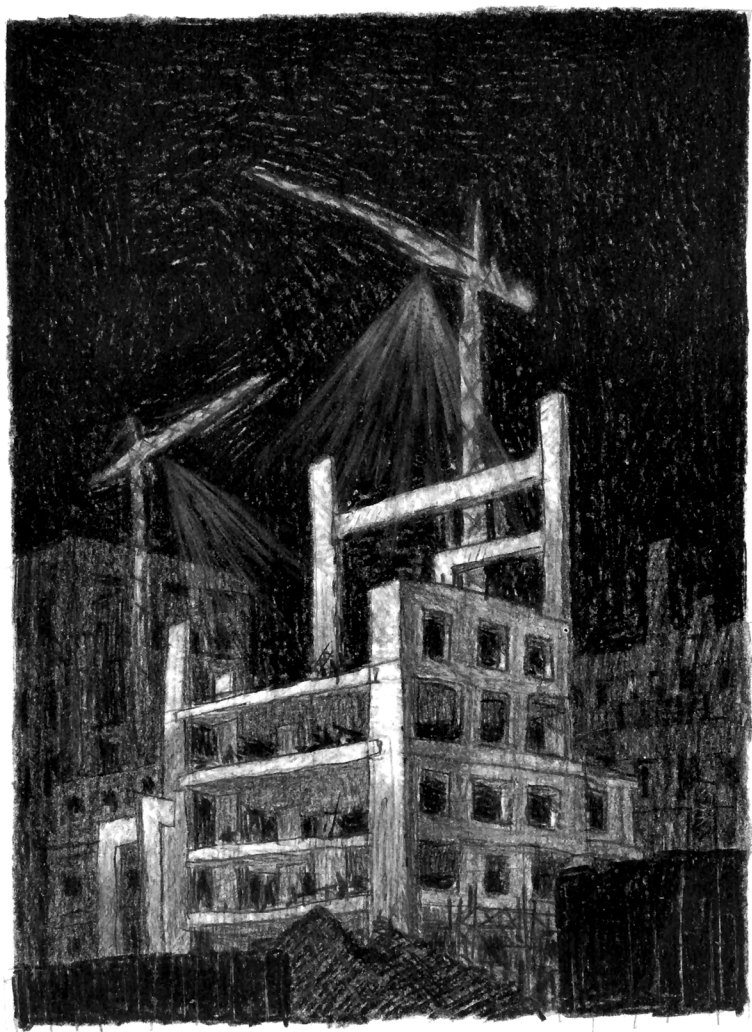
THIS MEANS NOTHING TO THEM

NAPOLEON IS EASY. EVERYBODY KNOWS HIM HERE.



AND THIS IS SHENZHEN. "BORING"

THEY DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE TAIWAN IN CHINA.



I TREAT MY TOOTHACHE
WITH DENTAL FLOSS LEFT
BEHIND BY THE LAST
DIRECTOR. AN ESSENTIALLY
NORTH AMERICAN PRACTICE,
IT SHOULD SAVE ME FROM
REPEATING THE LAST TRIP'S
HARROWING VISIT TO THE
DENTIST.

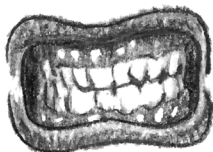


WHY SHOULDN'T I
TRUST A CHINESE
DENTIST?



I THOUGHT BACK THEN...

I'D HAD THE GREAT IDEA OF
GETTING MY WISDOM TEETH
PULLED SINCE THEY WERE
CROWDING THE REST IN AN
UNAESTHETIC WAY.



WANTING TO GET IT OVER WITH AND FEELING CONFIDENT, I
FOLLOWED MY TRANSLATOR TO THE DENTAL CLINIC.



SHE DISAPPEARED INTO THE CROWD AND CAME
OUT WITH AN APPOINTMENT ON THE FIRST FLOOR.



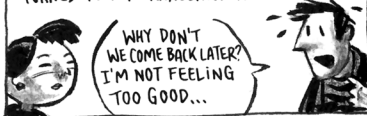
AT THE DOOR, ANOTHER CROWD. ONLOOKERS WERE WATCHING PATIENTS GETTING TREATED INSIDE.



MY TRANSLATOR PUSHED ME, AND I FOUND MYSELF IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE STRANGEST SIGHTS I'D EVER SEEN.



I MUST HAVE BEEN WHITE AS A SHEET WHEN I TURNED TO MY TRANSLATOR TO SAY:



I WAS THE LAUGHING STOCK OF THE STUDIO...

AH, AH... AFRAID OF DENTIST?



I DID GO BACK, BUT AT NIGHT WHEN THERE WERE FEWER PEOPLE AND WITH A FRIEND WHO SPOKE PERFECT CHINESE.

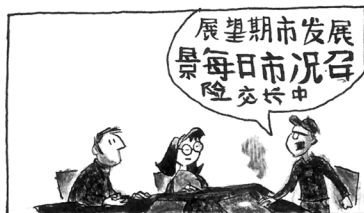
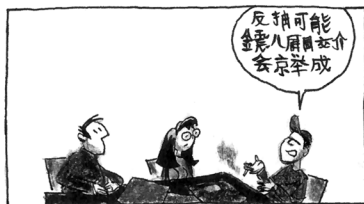
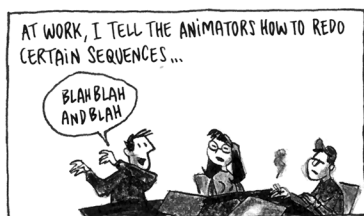


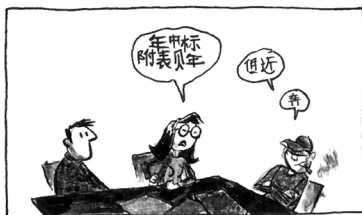
IN THE PROCESS, I'D LEARNED THE CHINESE WORD FOR WISDOM TOOTH AND THE MEANING OF MESIALIZATION: THE NATURAL FORWARD MOVEMENT OF THE TEETH.



LATER, I SAW WORSE AT A MARKET- A DENTIST WITH A PEDAL-OPERATED DRILL.



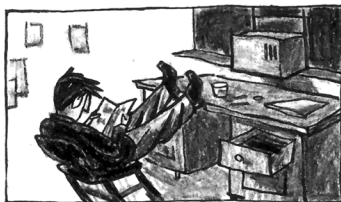


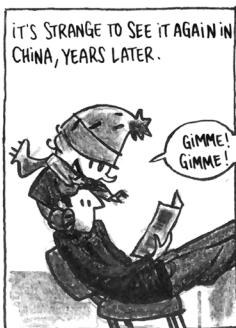


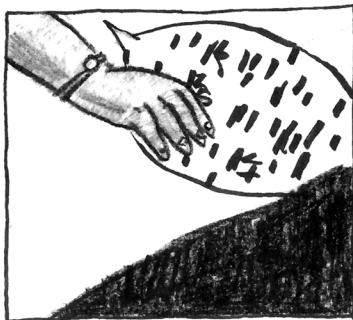
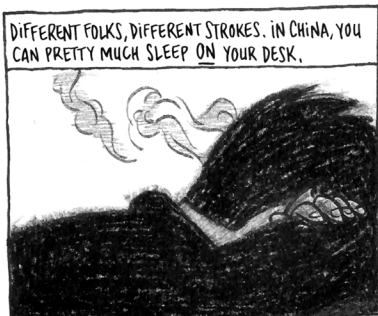
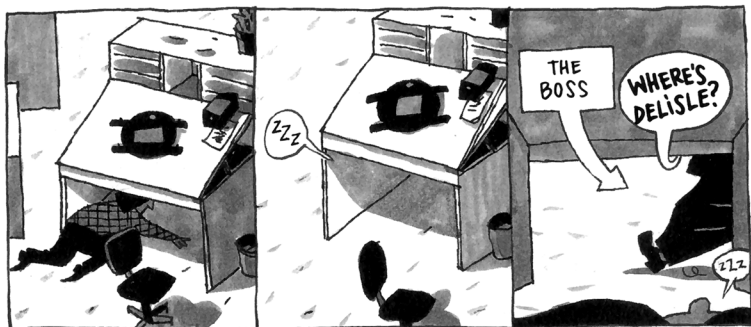
HALF THE ANIMATORS ARE
ASLEEP. I DON'T UNDER-
STAND HOW THEY CAN BE
SINCE WE'RE USUALLY OVER-
LOADED AND THE PLACE
SHOULD BE RUNNING FULL
TILT ...

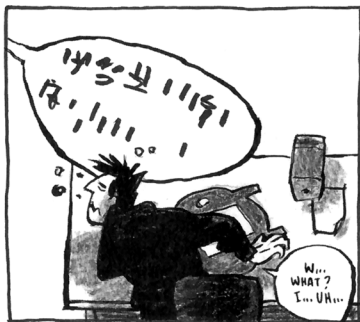


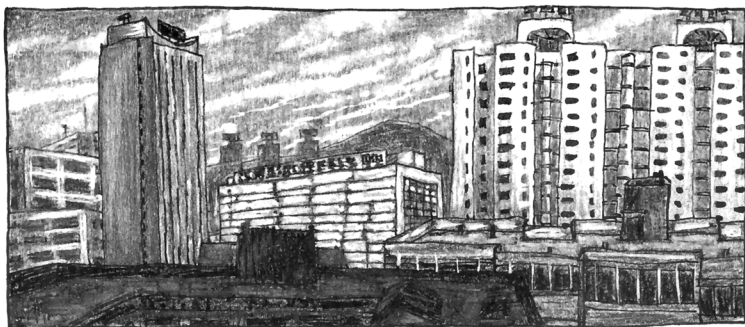
I SIT BACK AND WAIT, READING SPIROU COMICS
THAT MY EMPLOYER, DUPUIS-ANIMATION,
USED TO SEND TO THE FORMER DIRECTOR.











ONE DAY, I STEPPED INTO THE FIRST EATERY I CAME ACROSS. SINCE I COULD ALMOST MAKE MYSELF UNDERSTOOD, I ADOPTED IT FOR MOST OF MY STAY.



GETTING MY ORDER RIGHT INVOLVED A FEW STEPS...



FIRST, I TRIED THE SAME AS THE GUY NEXT TO ME. TOO SPICY... HICCUPS.



MADE A SPECTACLE OF MYSELF FOR THE OTHER DINERS.

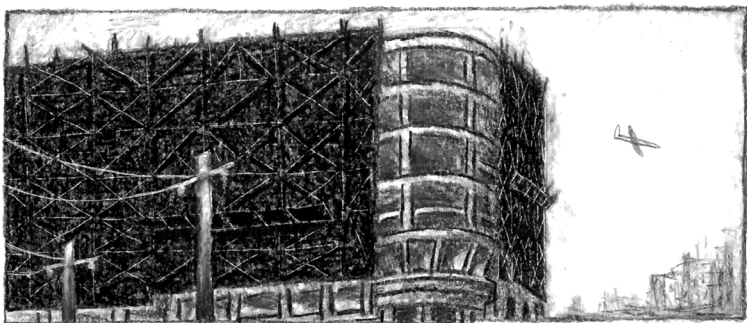
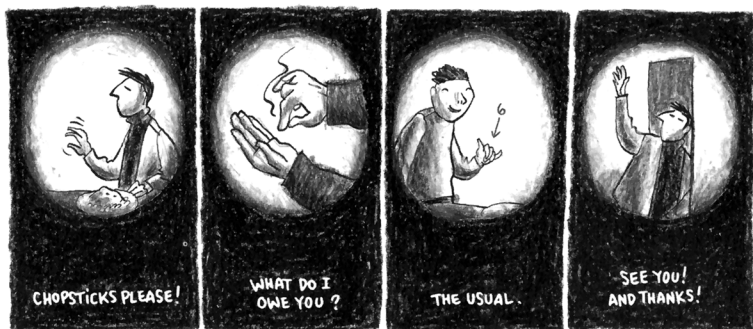


MY SECOND TRY WAS BETTER.
I ASKED FOR THE NAME OF THE
DISH IN WRITING.



THREE TIMES A WEEK, SCRAP
OF PAPER IN HAND, I ATE THE
SAME DISH. WITHOUT HAVING
TO SAY A WORD.





SOMETIMES I'D SEE THE
COOK IN THE STREET.
TO SAY HELLO, HE
WOULD DO THE SIGN
OF THE EGG DISH,
SMILING,



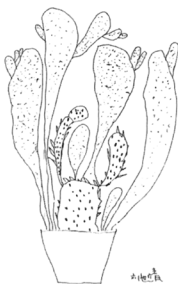


图46 爸爸的像 赵鑫 女6岁



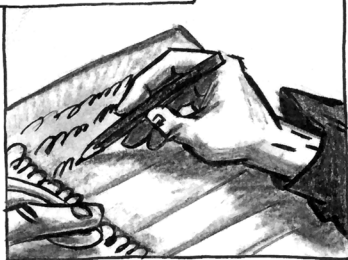
LIKE I'D PLANNED BEFORE LEAVING, I TAKE NOTES ABOUT MY STAY. BUT THE ORIGINAL IDEA OF TURNING THEM INTO A COMIC SEEMS INCREASINGLY VAGUE.



I KEEP AT IT WITHOUT
REAL CONVICTION.
GOING IN CIRCLES IN
A HOTEL ROOM, EVEN IF
IT IS IN CHINA, DOESN'T
SEEM LIKE THE KIND OF
TRIP ANYBODY WOULD
WANT TO READ ABOUT.



BUT SINCE THERE'S NOTHING
ELSE TO DO, I WRITE
A PAGE EVERY
EVENING.



I TRY NOT TO FEEL
SORRY FOR MYSELF,
EVEN AFTER I
READ ABOUT
JOCHEN'S TRIP TO
NEW YORK.



IN THE WINDOW OF "MAD COW", A
COW WITH FLASHING EYES NODS
IT'S HEAD MECHANICALLY,
FROTHING AT THE MOUTH...



WE EAT CHICKEN WINGS,
LISTENING TO A LIVE DJ AND
WATCHING KUNG FU
VIDEOS.



AT "MEX FISH", THE MURALS AND
VIDEOS CHANGE WITH EVERY
EXHIBIT...

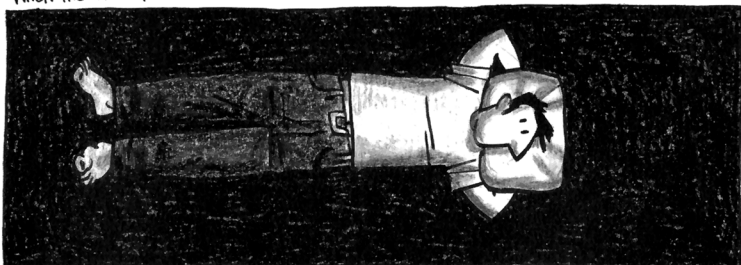
OH MAN...



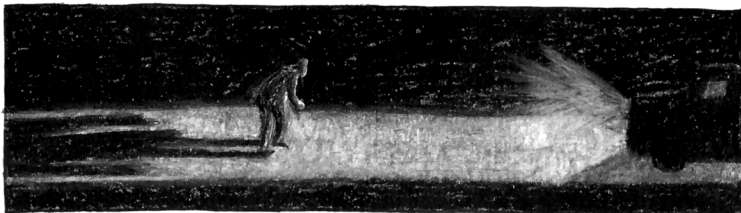
IN MY LIFE AS A DOG, YOUNG INGEMAR PLAYS DOWN HIS BAD LUCK BY THINKING ABOUT LAÏKA, THE DOG SENT ON A ONE-WAY TRIP INTO ORBIT, DOOMED TO DRIFT THROUGH SPACE.



I THINK ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE KIDNAPPED AND HELD CAPTIVE FOR NO REASON, NOT KNOWING WHEN THEY'LL BE RELEASED.

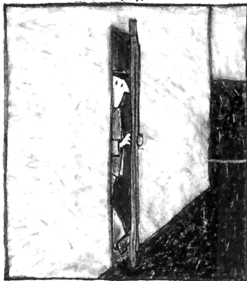


BEFORE LEAVING, I HAD READ AN ACCOUNT BY CHRISTOPHE ANDRÉ, WHO MANAGED TO ESCAPE TO AN EMBASSY AFTER BEING HELD HOSTAGE IN CHECHNYA FOR 111 DAYS. HE SPOKE OF THE SATISFACTION OF HAVING REGAINED HIS FREEDOM ALONE, INSTEAD OF BEING TRADED LIKE A COMMODITY. SURELY THE BEST WAY OUT, PSYCHOLOGICALLY.



IS IT BEING IN A COUNTRY LIKE CHINA THAT'S GOT ME THINKING ABOUT FREEDOM?

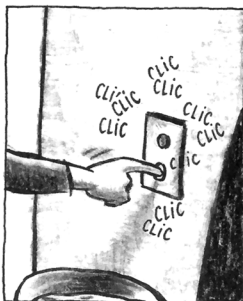
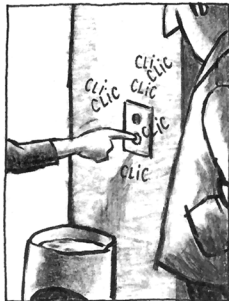
MORNINGS, WHEN THE FLOOR CLERK SEES ME LEAVE THE ROOM, SHE RUNS AHEAD TO CALL THE ELEVATOR. YOU'VE ONLY GOT TO PRESS THE BUTTON ONCE.

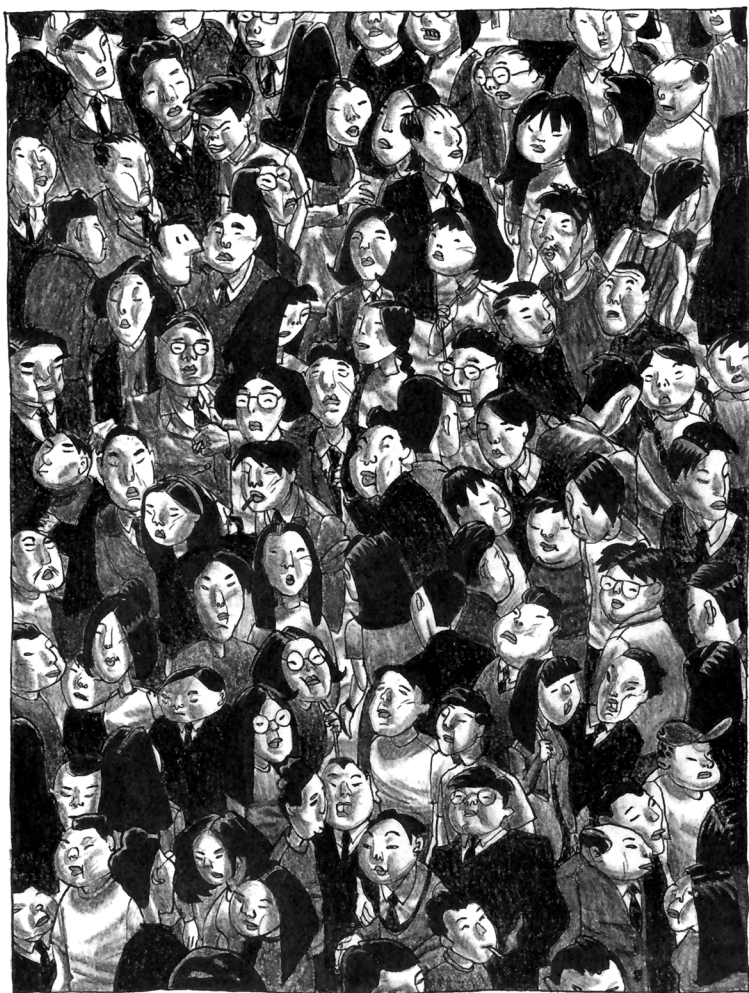


BUT SHE KEEPS PRESSING UNTIL THE ELEVATOR ARRIVES. SHE MUST THINK PURE DETERMINATION WILL MAKE IT COME FASTER.



I'D EXPLAIN MY POINT OF VIEW, BUT I DON'T SEE HOW WITH HAND SIGNALS. SO I STAND BACK AND WATCH.





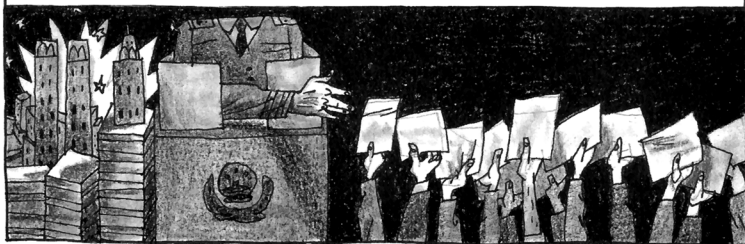
THE DESCENT TO HELL, ACCORDING TO DANTE :

Paradiso
Purgatorio
Vestibule
The River Acheron
Limbo
The River Styx
City of Satah
Malebolge
Inferno

SAME THING, TRANSPosed TO CHINA :

U S A
HONG KONG
SHENZHEN
SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE
THE BIG CITIES
CANTON - BEIJING - SHANGHAI
THE COUNTRYSIDE

UNLESS YOU'RE AN ILLEGAL OR GETTING PAID UNDER THE TABLE, EACH STEP REQUIRES A VISA THAT'S HARD TO GET, SEEING THAT JUST ABOUT EVERYONE WANTS OUT.



TO THE NORTH FOR EXAMPLE, SHENZHEN IS SEALED OFF BY AN ELECTRIC FENCE GUARDED DAY AND NIGHT BY SOLDIERS IN WATCHTOWERS... I COULD SEE THEM CLEARLY FROM MY WINDOW.

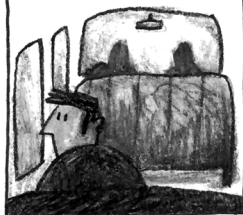


MY FIRST TIME THROUGH THE ELECTRIC ZONE CAME THANKS TO AN INVITATION FROM A STUDIO IN CANTON. A KIND OF BUSINESS TRIP TO SEE A NEW STUDIO STAFFED MOSTLY BY THE BEST OF OUR OWN FORMER ANIMATORS.

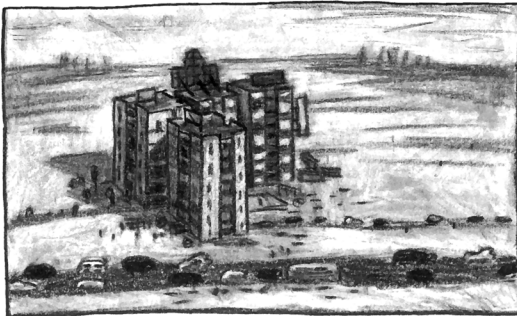
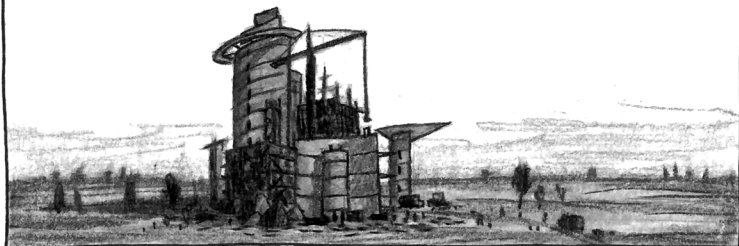
SATURDAY MORNING: RENDEZVOUS AT A CHIC HOTEL.



AND THEN 2 HOURS ON THE ROAD, HEADING NORTH.



IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, HUGE CONSTRUCTION SITES RISE OUT OF THE GROUND... GIGANTIC BUILDINGS LIKE CONVENTION CENTERS, BUT WITHOUT A SURROUNDING CITY.



CONSTRUCTION...EMPTY LOTS... CONSTRUCTION... IT GOES ON FOR HOURS. NOT MUCH MORE DEPRESSING THAN THE STRETCH OF HIGHWAY BETWEEN MONTREAL AND QUEBEC CITY.



EXCEPT BACK HOME, IT'S TREES ... EMPTY LOTS... TREES...



CROSSING A VIADUCT, I SEE A
MAN SQUATTING IN THAT
TYPICAL ASIAN WAY, QUIETLY
READING HIS NEWSPAPER
WHILE BALANCING ON THE
RAILING...



FINALLY, THE
KIND OF CITY
YOU SEE IN DOCU-
MENTARIES.

FROM THE MOMENT I
ARRIVE, I'M TAKEN
CARE OF. A TRANSLATOR
JOINS US AND INTRO-
DUCE ME TO A LOT OF
PEOPLE.



AT THE HOLIDAY INN
RESTAURANT, I EAT
A DELICIOUS SNAKE
SOUP...



THE WAITER POURS FRUIT
TEA FROM AN ODD-
LOOKING TEAPOT.



THE HOTEL MANAGER
WELCOMES US BY
PRESENTING HIS
BUSINESS CARD.



IN CHINA, CARDS ARE
OFFERED WITH BOTH
HANDS...



AND RECEIVED
THE SAME
WAY
...



THEN, YOU'RE EXPECTED
TO SEEM INTER-
ESTED...

达涅利 广州代表
广州 达涅利
世界 达涅利
邮政 达涅利



HMMM... FASCINATING.

THAT DAY, I TOUR
THE STUDIO (MUCH
NICER THAN THE
ONE IN SHENZHEN),
AM BROUGHT
BACK TO THE HOTEL
AND WANDER
AROUND.



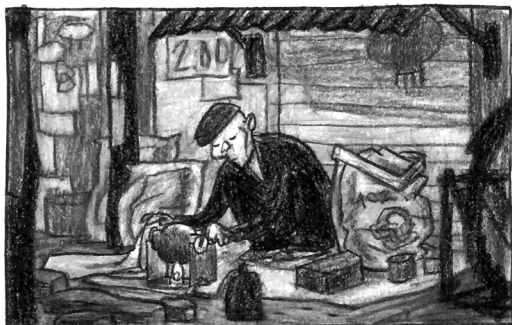
THERE ARE
LOTS OF
PEOPLE, BUT I
MANAGE TO
BLEND IN, AND
THAT'S SOME-
THING IN ITSELF.

THERE'S A LOT
TO SEE IN
CANTON: OLD
MARKETS,
PAGODAS,
MUSEUMS...



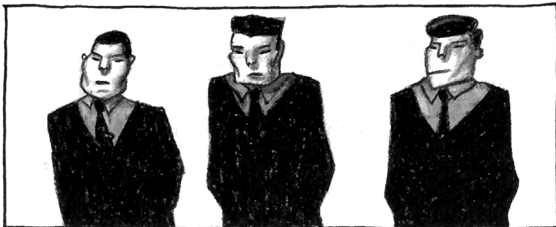
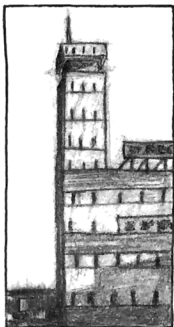
BUT ABOVE ALL,
OH JOY...
THERE ARE CA-
FÉS THAT SERVE
REAL COFFEE!

HERE, FOR AN EXOTIC
TOUCH, IS A LOOK AT
HOW OUR CHINESE
FRIENDS MAKE
POPCORN.



AND ENJOY!
YUM.





NEXT DAY, I VISIT A TELEVISION STATION, JOINED BY THE BOSS AND A FEW MANAGERS. AT SOME POINT, TALK TURNS TO SALARIES... I EXPLAIN THAT BACK HOME, TECHNICIANS LIKE THOSE WE JUST MET ARE PAID OVERTIME ON SUNDAYS.



GENERAL
HILARITY

I DON'T THINK
ANY JOKE I
TOLD DURING
MY STAY IN
CHINA GOT
A BIGGER
LAUGH.

AFTERWARD, IT'S
A TOUR OF THE
CITY WITH THE
TRANSLATOR
AND CHAUFFEUR.



MURRAY!

MY TRANSLATOR MUST HAVE
BEEN TOLD TO STICK WITH ME.
HE EVEN TAGS ALONG TO
THE SHITTER.



AFTER A WHILE, HE
PRETENDS TO TAKE A
LEAK...



OUR DRIVER (I WASN'T TOLD HIS
NAME) HAS A FACE MADE FOR THE
MOVIES. AN ASIAN BOGART.



AT THE
MUSEUM, IT
SOUNDS LIKE
HE KNOWS
VOLUMES
ABOUT MING
VASES.



經許可，禁止右側
非參自行闖下無效。
身高 1.1 米以下的兒
童 1.4 米的兒童須購
的遊客須購全票。

BUT MY TRANS-
LATOR, IN A
SHOW OF PASSIVE
RESISTANCE,
TRANSLATES
ONLY A
FRACTION OF
WHAT HE
SAYS.



THAT EVENING,
WE END UP
IN A PSEUDO-
KOREAN
RESTAURANT
...



I HAVE NEVER
SEEN ANYONE,
ANYWHERE,
PUT AS MUCH
SALT ON
FOOD.

FASCINATED, I WATCH THE CHEF FRY UP RICE, CANTONESE STYLE, WITH SHRIMP, EGGS, SOY SAUCE, A BIT OF PEPPER



LATER, AFTER RACING AGAINST THE CLOCK THROUGH CANTONESE TRAFFIC, I MANAGE TO MAKE IT ONTO THE SHENZHEN EXPRESS, THANKS TO OLD BOGIE, THE DRIVER.



THERE, I
JUST HAD
AN
EXCELLENT
WEEKEND
IN CANTON,

IT WAS GREAT
TO MEET A
FEW
PEOPLE.

TO SEE
OTHER SIDES
OF THIS
CULTURE.

CANTONESE RICE,
FOR EXAMPLE .
TO MAKE IT JUST
RIGHT, YOU'VE
GOT TO POUR ON
THE SALT.
AND IT'S
GOOD !

TO TALK,
EXCHANGE
VIEWS
...

YOU REALLY
DO LEARN A
HELLUVA LOT
WHEN YOU
TRAVEL.

AFTER THAT, THE
THOUGHT OF
GOING BACK TO
SHENZHEN IS
DEPRESSING.

AND YET
IT'S A
DREAM
CITY FOR
MANY IN
CHINA.

THINGS SHOULD
IMPROVE THE
CLOSER YOU
GET TO
PARADISE.

SAYS DANTE .

I JUST
HOPE THEY
DON'T SERVE
INSTANT
COFFEE
IN
LIMBO.

IT'S LIKE
THAT STUDIO
IN RÉUNION.

YOU'D THINK :
TROPICAL PARADISE.

WRONG
!

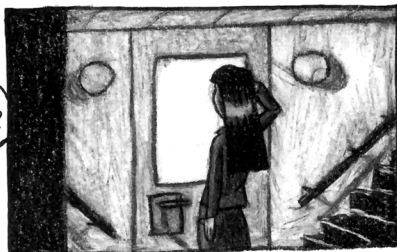
THEY HAD MA-
NAGED TO PUT
IT IN THE
SEDIEST PLACE
POSSIBLE .



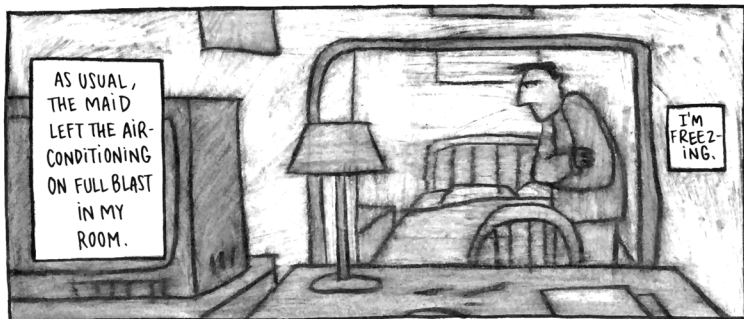
A YOUNG MAN COMES UP AND WE TRY TO CONVERSE.



PREDICTABLY, HE HANDS ME HIS CARD AND INVITES ME TO CALL SO WE CAN MEET AGAIN.



FACING THE DOOR, THE HOSTESS GIVES A MILITARY SALUTE AS WE PULL INTO THE STATION.



I'M
FREEZ-
ING.

FEELING
A BIT FED
UP, I GIVE
THE THERMO-
STAT A
LITTLE KICK.



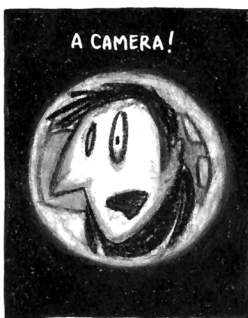
THANKS TO
MY OUT-
BURST, I
DISCOVER
THE HORRI-
BLE TRUTH...



I DON'T
BELIEVE IT!



A CAMERA!



I'VE BEEN UNDER SUR-
VEILLANCE ALL ALONG!...



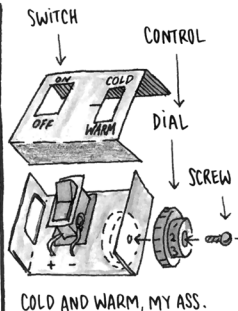
MUST BE THE KGB!

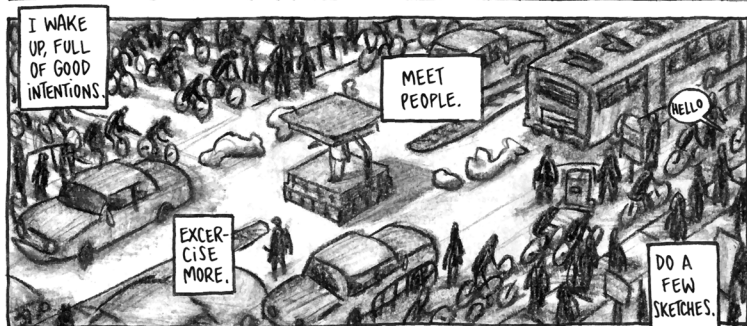
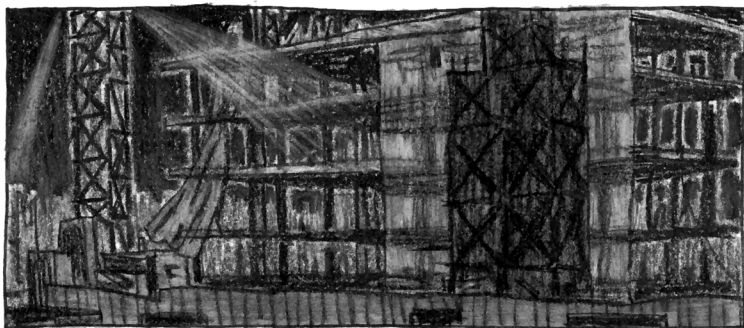
NO, NOT
AT
ALL.



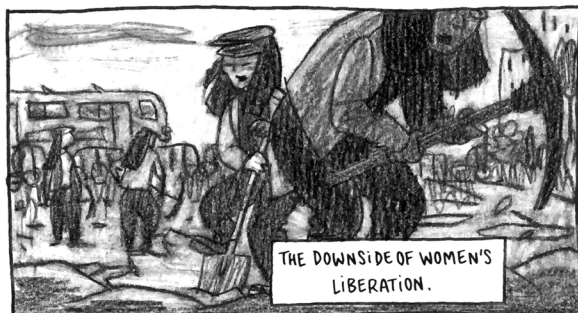
THERE IS NO CAMERA...
AND BESIDES, THE KGB
IS SOVIET, NOT CHINESE.

BUT I DISCOVER SOMETHING
ELSE: THE TEMPERATURE
CONTROL ON THE AC DOESN'T
CONTROL A THING. IT'S JUST
A PLASTIC DIAL HELD IN
PLACE BY A SCREW.





AT THE CORNER,
A GROUP OF
WOMEN REPAIR
THE STREET
WITH PICKS AND
SHOVELS.





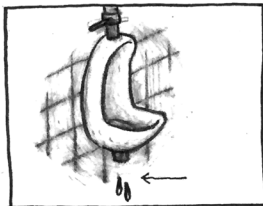
IT'S THE GOOD OLD
CHINESE METHOD: LET
THINGS PILE UP TILL
THE LAST MINUTE SO
THE EPISODE IS CHECKED
AND APPROVED IN A
RUSH.



BUT SINCE I DON'T
PARTICULARLY WANT TO
WORK THEIR WAY, I
WALK OUT HALFWAY
THROUGH THE EVENING.



BEFORE LEAVING, I DISCOVER WHY
PEOPLE AT THE STUDIO USE ONLY
THE URINAL TO THE RIGHT.



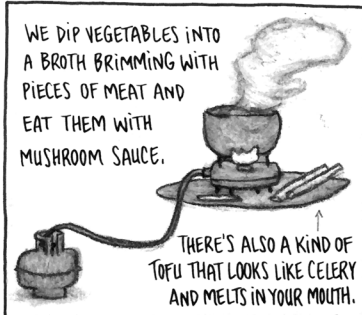
THAT EVENING, I MEET UP WITH CHEUN, MY FRIEND FROM THE TRAIN, AND WE GO EAT DOG AT A RESTAURANT I HAD FOUND.



I'M THRILLED TO HAVE A GUIDE AND HE'S HAPPY TO PRACTICE HIS ENGLISH.



WE DIP VEGETABLES INTO A BROTH BRIMMING WITH PIECES OF MEAT AND EAT THEM WITH MUSHROOM SAUCE.

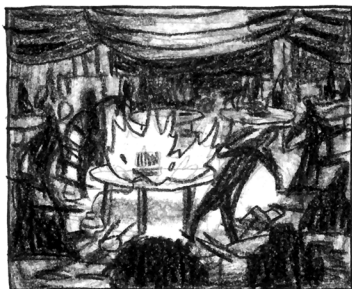


THERE'S ALSO A KIND OF TOFU THAT LOOKS LIKE CELERY AND MELTS IN YOUR MOUTH.

DOG ISN'T BAD. IT TASTES GAMEY, A BIT LIKE MUTTON.



SUDDENLY, THE TABLE NEXT TO US CATCHES FIRE.

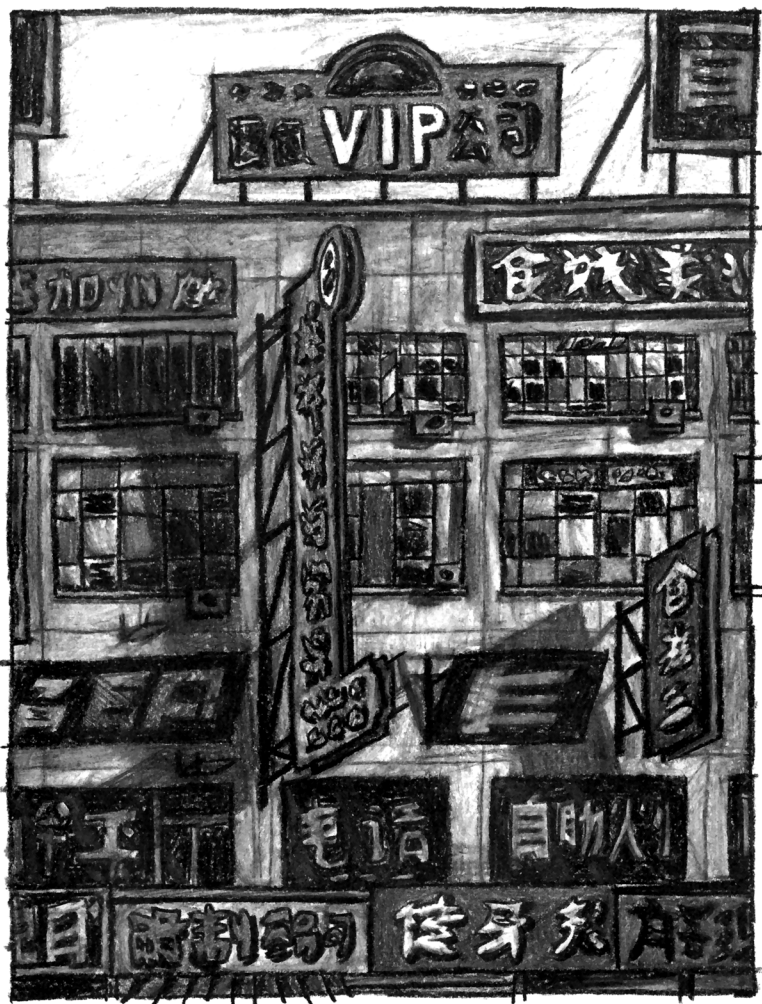


THE FLAME CRAWLS DANGEROUSLY DOWN THE RUBBER HOSE.

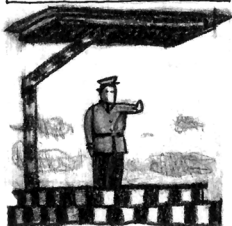


LUCKILY, A HEROIC WAITER TURNS OFF THE GAS IN TIME. WE DRINK TO OUR BRUSH WITH DEATH.





I PASS BY MANY ODD SHOPS
ON MY WAY TO WORK.



THERE ARE A FEW
THAT SELL SAFES
AND INSTANT
SOUPS.



WHICH SAYS A LOT ABOUT THE CONCERNS OF THE AVERAGE CUSTOMER.

A SAFE AND
TWO SOUPS,
PLEASE.



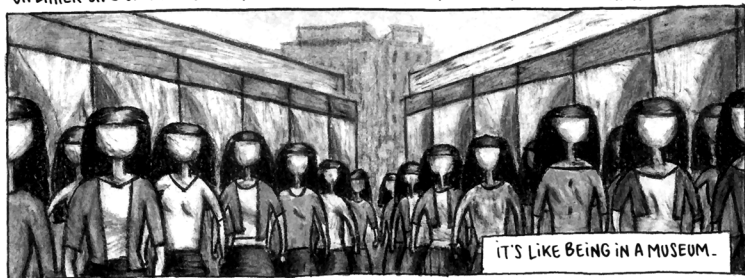
THEY'RE ALL GREEN WITH LITTLE
DECORATIONS IN THE CORNERS,
LUCKY LUKE STYLE.



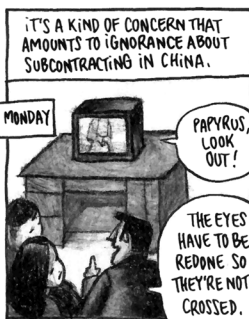
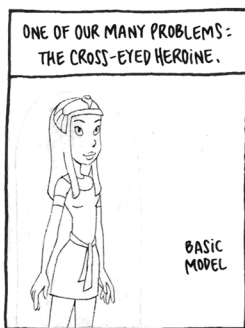
THERE'S ALSO A
SURREAL FASHION
ALLEY.



THE VENDORS DISPLAY THEIR COLLECTIONS ON THE SAME TWO MANNEQUINS, ALL PLACED THE SAME WAY
ON EITHER SIDE OF THEIR SHOPS. A KIND OF MILITARY FASHION PARADE, BUT STATIONARY.



IT'S LIKE BEING IN A MUSEUM.



YOU'D THINK THEY WOULDN'T
HAVE A PROBLEM DRAWING
ALMOND-SHAPED
EYES.



ESPECIALLY ONE OF THEM, A VERY
TALL MANCHURIAN WITH VERY
SLANTED EYES.



HA
HA
HA

BUT EITHER HE FOUND THE WHOLE
THING HILARIOUS OR HE WAS
PLAYING ME FOR AN IDIOT.



崩任流味品
保富珍俊以
費並食久手有費
精富

HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA



王鼎业秋读行保得自
地金印助火滔瑞水图三



I DIDN'T
CATCH
THAT...



UH...
HE SAYS HE
WILL DO THE
EYES BETTER
NEXT TIME.

HMM.



CAN'T LET MYSELF
GET TOO PARA-
NOID IN THIS KIND
OF CONTEXT.



BASICALLY,
EVERYTHING
DEPENDS ON
THE STORYBOARD.

THE BETTER
IT'S DRAWN,
THE BETTER
THE EPISODE...



EPISODE 16

-THETI TURNS TO LOOK FORWARD,
INTO POSE, STARTING TO OFF
SCREEN
-PAPYRUS GESTURE: TO OFF SCREEN,

WHEN IT'S
A MESS,
ANYTHING
CAN HAPPEN.



EPISODE 16

Scene

0:02:50

Tempo in sec

6:58:38

Video images

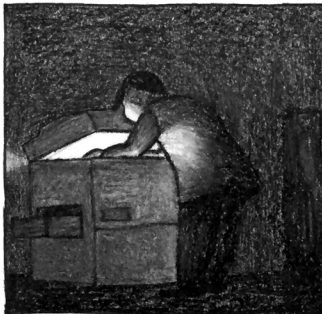
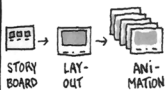
62

(REUT BG 116 SEARRE OUT FOCUS)

Tiya smiling Papyrus surprised

67 - RAOUSER (tired and out of breath)(OFF):
Oh, my aching bones...

TO CUT AN ADDI-
TIONAL JOB, THE
PRODUCTION TEAM
ASSIGNED LAYOUT
TO THE CHINESE.



RESULT:

THERE IS NO LAYOUT TEAM.
INSTEAD, ANIMATORS
WORK FROM PHOTOCOPY
ENLARGEMENTS OF
STORYBOARD PANELS.

WHICH IS HIGHLY UNORTHODOX
IN TERMS OF PRODUCTIVITY.

WHEN I CAME TO MONTPELLIER IN 1990, 3 STUDIOS THERE EMPLOYED ANIMATORS.



TEN YEARS LATER, ANIMATORS ARE VIRTUALLY OBSOLETE, AND LAYOUT HAS MET THE SAME FATE.

IT'S TOO BAD. ANIMATION USED TO BE
A NICE PROFESSION.



BECAUSE IF YOU CAN MASTER THE BASICS OF MOVEMENT,
YOUR OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS IMPROVE DRAMATICALLY
THANKS TO YOUR BIONIC EYE.



REGULAR
EYE



ANIMATOR'S
EYE

WITH
30% MORE
RETINAL
PERSISTENCE!

TAKE AN ANIMATOR
IN A PARK...



PASSER-BY



PIGEON



LEAF



DOG



BIKE



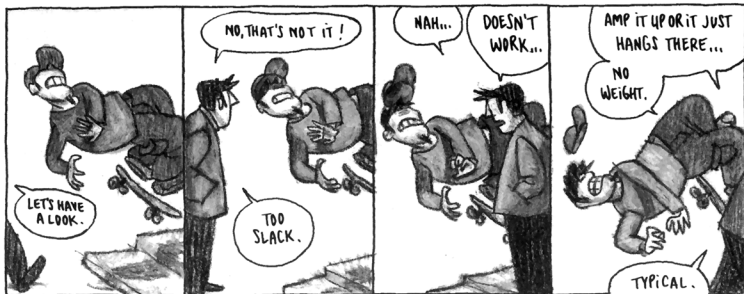
PASSER-BY



FLAG

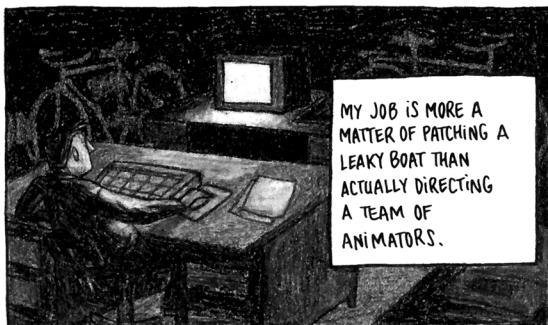
EVERYTHING
INVOLVING MOVE-
MENT TAKES
ON ADDED
SUBTLETY.

WITH PRACTICE, AN ANIMATOR CAN EVEN MAKE TIME STAND STILL FOR A MOMENT.

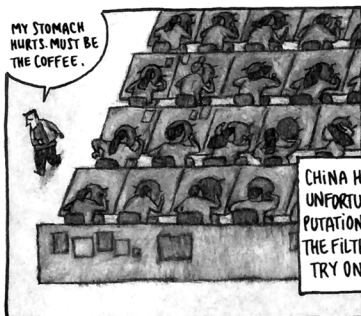


WITH SUB-CONTRACTING,
ANIMATION QUALITY
HAS TAKEN A HIT.

BUT SINCE THIS IS
A TV SERIES,
"IT'LL DO", AS
THEY SAY.



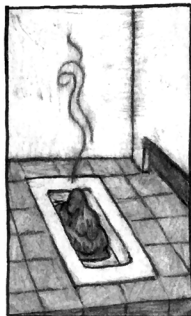
MY STOMACH
HURTS. MUST BE
THE COFFEE.



CHINA HAS THE
UNFORTUNATE RE-
PUTATION OF BEING
THE FILTHIEST COUN-
TRY ON EARTH.

AH!...

STILL NO
WATER.



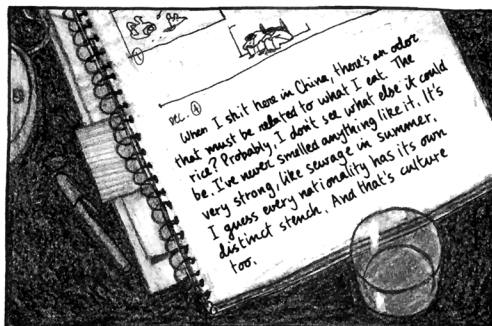
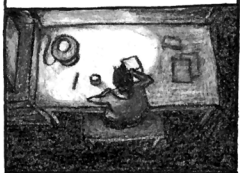
SPECTACULAR, BUT YOU
GET USED TO IT... IT
BECOMES NORMAL ...
EVEN THE SMELL THAT'S
SO REPULSIVE AT FIRST
TAKES ON SUBTLETIES
THAT YOU COME TO
APPRECIATE,

HMM...

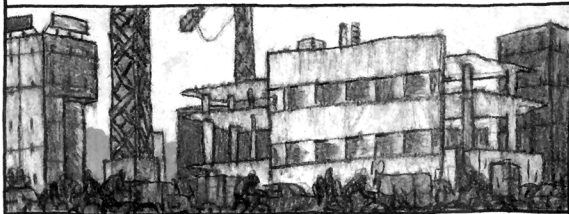
... VERY
COLORFUL
TODAY.



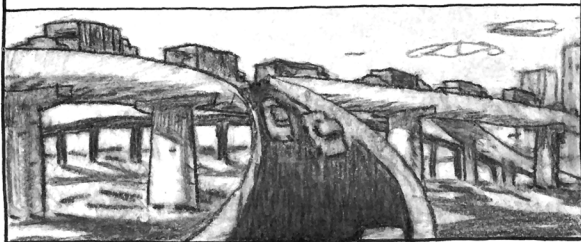
BACK AT THE HOTEL, THE DAY'S EVENTS INSPIRE A FEW THOUGHTS THAT I JOT DOWN BEFORE GOING TO BED.



THIS SATURDAY MORNING, I HAVE A SUDDEN URGE TO GET ON MY BIKE, MAKE MY WAY THROUGH THE CITY AND EXPLORE CHINA'S COUNTRYSIDE ... BASICALLY, THERE'S NOTHING ELSE TO DO.



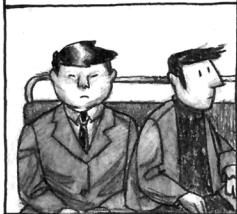
AFTER A GOOD TWO HOURS OF HARD WORK, I'M BLOCKED BY A RAMP THAT MERGES WITH A HIGHWAY. I TURN AROUND.



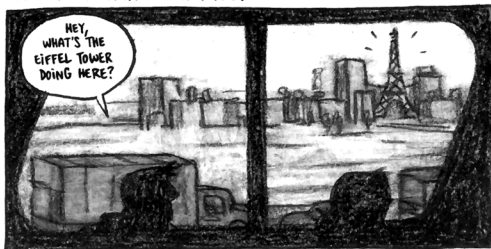
GREAT WEEKEND.



NEXT DAY, I VISIT THE CITY'S ONLY TOURIST ATTRACTION WITH CHEUN.



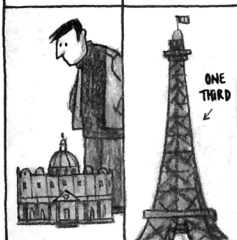
"WINDOWS OF THE WORLD", A THEME PARK OFFERING LOCALS A CONDENSED TOUR OF THE WORLD.



IT'S GOT ALL THE GREAT MONUMENTS.

BUT 19 TIMES SMALLER.

EXCEPT THE EIFFEL TOWER.



JONATHAN SWIFT WOULD HAVE LIKED THIS.



THE PONT DU GARD.



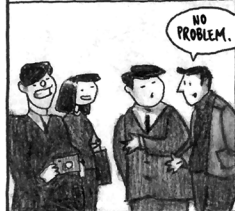
THE GREAT PYRAMIDS.



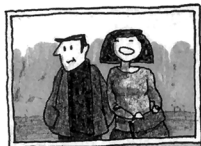
THE GRAND CANYON (PLASTIC).



IN AUSTRALIA, A GUY ASKS ME TO POSE FOR A PICTURE WITH HIS WIFE.



MY COMPANION SEEMS VERY PROUD OF THE SITUATION...



HER HUSBAND TELLS EVERYONE THAT I'M FRENCH.

THERE'S A DWÉLÉ DANCE PERFORMANCE IN THE AFRICA SECTION. I HURRY OVER. AFRICANS ARE RARE IN CHINA.



Turns out they're Chinese from the Northwest (less typically Asian), covered in shoe polish and goofing around like kids.



WOW...
THAT WAS WORTH THE TRIP...

DEFINITELY THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY!



I SEE A RAT CRAWL OUT OF THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL.

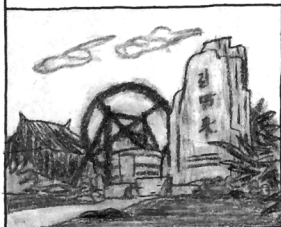
AS WE NEAR THE CERAMIC REPLICA OF SOUTH SIDE MANHATTAN, MY GUIDE LIVENS UP...



I TELL HIM ABOUT MY RECENT STAY THERE. WHEN I DESCRIBE CHINATOWN, HE'S RIVETED, GASPING IN AMAZEMENT.



NEXT DOOR IS ANOTHER THEME PARK, "SPLENDID CHINA", DEDICATED TO THE COUNTRY'S OWN MARVELS.



CHEUN HAS NEVER SET FOOT THERE, EVEN THOUGH THIS IS HIS 5TH TIME AT "WINDOWS OF THE WORLD".



WILL YOU GO VISIT "SPLENDID CHINA" ONE DAY?

NO.



IT DOES LEAVE YOU WITH AN URGE TO TRAVEL...



I WOULDN'T MIND SEEING THE TAJ MAHAL ONE OF THESE DAYS...

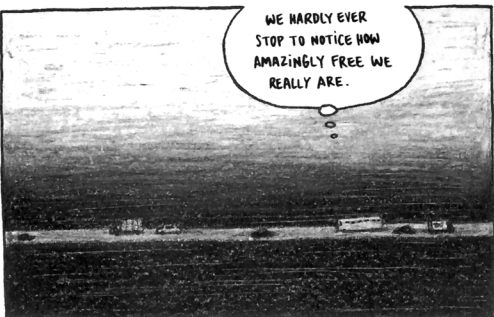


WHEN I THINK THAT ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS BUY A TICKET...

I CAN GO WHERE I LIKE...



WE HARDLY EVER STOP TO NOTICE HOW AMAZINGLY FREE WE REALLY ARE.



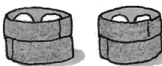
I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING MY GUIDE ALONG
TO TRY A NEW RESTAURANT.

GOAT LUNG AU
POIVRE. A BIT
RUBBERY...



THOUSAND YEAR EGGS.
UNAPPETIZINGLY GREEN
BUT
DELICIOUS.

AND STEAMED BUNS...
THE HOUSE SPECIAL...



AT THE HOTEL, THE
DOORMAN'S ENGLISH
IS COMING ALONG.

HOW OLD
IS YOU?

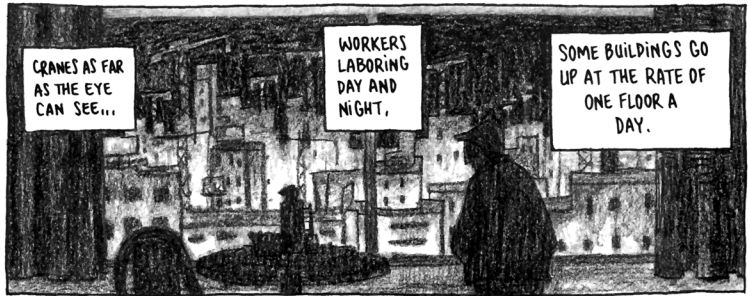


SHENZHEN IS THE FASTEST GROWING CITY IN THE WORLD.

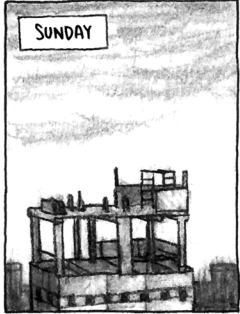
CRANES AS FAR
AS THE EYE
CAN SEE...

WORKERS
LABORING
DAY AND
NIGHT,

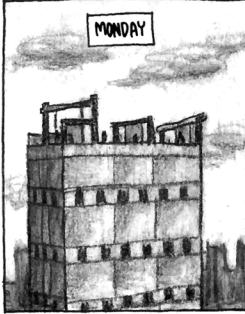
SOME BUILDINGS GO
UP AT THE RATE OF
ONE FLOOR A
DAY.



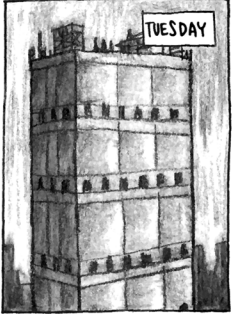
SUNDAY



MONDAY



TUESDAY



A DETAIL IN THE STREET REMINDS ME THAT CHRISTMAS ISN'T FAR OFF...



THAT DAY, GOING
BY THE MARKET,
I SAW ONE OF
THE MOST
INCREDIBLE
SIGHTS OF MY
TRIP...

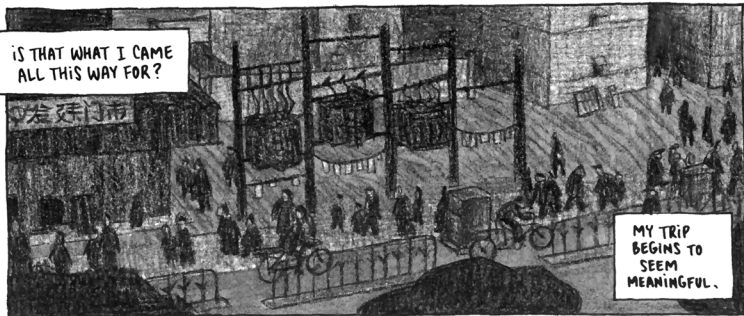


IN CHINA, WHEN A FISH
ISN'T FRESH, IT'S FLOATING
BELLY UP.



AT THE MARKETS, GARBAGE IS THROWN INTO THE CENTER OF THE AISLES.
IN THE COURSE OF THE DAY, PASSERSBY GRIND IT DOWN UNDERFOOT
UNTIL IT GRADUALLY TURNS TO MUSH.





THE STUDIO IS ON THE 8TH FLOOR. THERE ARE TWO ELEVATORS, ONE OF WHICH IS ALWAYS BROKEN, SO IT OFTEN TAKES FOREVER...



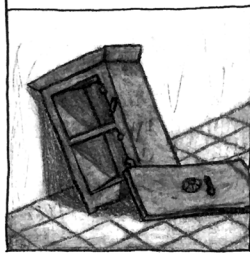
BEFORE LONG, THERE'S A CROWD. I KNOW MOST OF THE PEOPLE AND WORK WITH THEM EVERY DAY, BUT WITHOUT A TRANSLATOR, WE CAN'T COMMUNICATE.



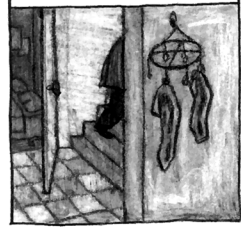
OR ELSE I TAKE THE STAIRS.



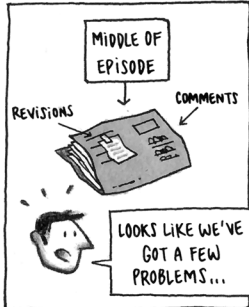
ON THE 5TH FLOOR, THERE'S AN EMPTY SAFE...



ON THE 7TH, A COUPLE LIVING IN A CLOSET-SIZED APARTMENT HANGS OUT MEAT TO DRY.



WE SHOULD BE WRAPPING UP AN EPISODE TODAY. THE FOLDERS ARE GETTING TATTERED.



THINGS ARE UNUSUALLY CALM. I FIND AN OLD COPY OF *THEODORE POUSSIN*,* IN WHICH A MYSTERIOUS CHARACTER RECITES A HAUNTING POEM BY BAUDELAIRE...



* COMIC BY FRANK LE GALL

BITTER THE KNOWLEDGE WE GET FROM TRAVELING! THE WORLD, MONOTONOUS AND MEAN TODAY, YESTERDAY, TOMORROW, ALWAYS, LETS US SEE OUR OWN IMAGE AN OASIS OF HORROR IN A DESERT OF BOREDOM.



THE PROJECT DIRECTOR I'VE BE-FRIENDED TELLS ME HE'S GOING IN FOR LUNG SURGERY...

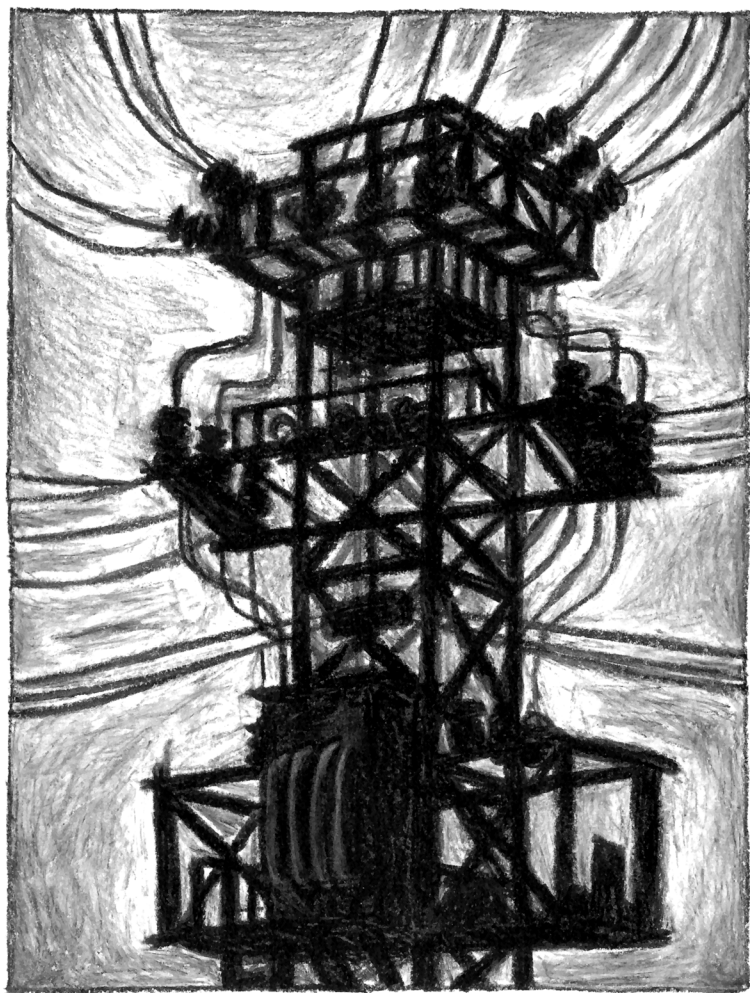


IN THE TWO WEEKS THAT HE'S GONE, NOBODY SEEMS TO WORRY ABOUT HIM...

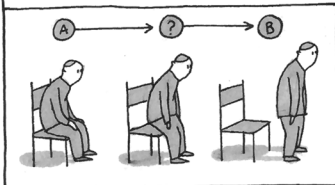


ONE DAY HE'S BACK, LOOKING DRAINED, WITH LONG SCARS ON HIS NECK.

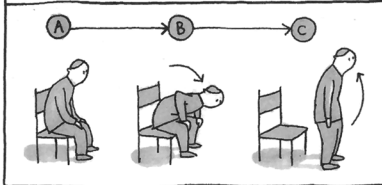




I WAS EXPLAINING TO AN ANIMATOR THAT IT'S PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO GET UP FROM A CHAIR THE WAY HE DREW IT.



YOU HAVE TO LEAN FORWARD AND SHIFT YOUR CENTER OF GRAVITY TO STAND UP NORMALLY.



I ENCOURAGED HIM TO GIVE IT A TRY...



HE DID AND...



LATER, I REALIZED THAT HE'D KNOCKED OVER MY COFFEE...



HIS FOLDER WAS WORSE FOR THE WEAR.

I WIPED UP. THERE WAS STILL SOME UNDER THE GLASS, SO I SLID IN BLOT-
TING PAPER, THEN FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT.



INEVITABLY, MOLD DEVELOPED. I DIDN'T INTERFERE. DAY AFTER DAY, I ADMIRIED THE CHANGING PATTERNS.



LUNCHTIME. I WAS EATING LACQUERED DUCK WHEN A GIRL FROM ANIMATION RAN IN, HANDED ME A GIFT AND DISAPPEARED.



SHE REPEATED THE MANEUVER A SECOND TIME, PROBABLY HOPING FOR FEWER REVISIONS.



WHEN SHE SAW THAT SHE WASN'T GETTING ANYWHERE WITH BIG MACS, SHE TRIED PHOTO ALBUMS INSTEAD.



GIRL AND TREE
GIRL AND FOUNTAIN
GIRL AND TEMPLE
GIRL AND RESTAURANT
GIRL AND PALACE
GIRL AND CAR
GIRL AND MOUNTAIN
GIRL AND POOL





ALWAYS HER
FACE AGAINST
A VARIETY
OF BLURRY
BACKDROPS.



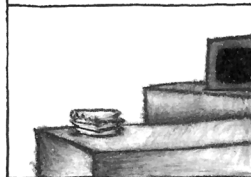
BUT NOTHING
REALLY
SEXY, UN-
FORTUNATELY
...



THERE WAS ALSO
AN ALBUM WITH
MORE CANDID
PHOTOS...



CLEARLY, MODESTY WASN'T
HER PROBLEM... I LEFT THE
ALBUMS WHERE I FOUND
THEM AND NEVER HEARD
ABOUT THEM AGAIN.



I HAD BEEN COM-
MUTING TO WORK BY
BIKE FOR A WHILE.



CYCLING, EVEN SLOWLY, IS
A REAL CHALLENGE.

TO MANAGE, YOU FIRST HAVE
TO PUT ASIDE ALL CULTU-
RALLY INGRAINED
POLITENESS.

A FEW BASIC PRINCIPLES
APPLY...

FIRST
PRINCIPLE: AN EMPTY SPACE
MAY BE FILLED



WHICH MEANS PEOPLE CAN CUT
IN WHENEVER THEY LIKE.

SECOND PRINCIPLE:
NOBODY ELSE MATTERS...



ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE A 5-FOOT RADIUS.

TRYING TO THINK FURTHER AHEAD IS USELESS.



TO CROSS THE STREET: WAIT FOR A SMALL BREAK IN THE FLOW AND INSERT A WHEEL ...



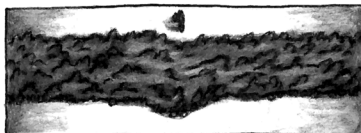
PROCEED WITH DETERMINATION... THE FLOW WILL NOW MOVE OUT BEHIND YOU ...



TRAFFIC WILL MOVE OUT AHEAD OF YOU IN AN EFFORT TO PUSH YOU BACK...



THE WORST IS OVER, YOU'RE DOING FINE.



BIKES ARE A SOLUTION THAT'S PERFECTLY ADAPTED TO CITIES.



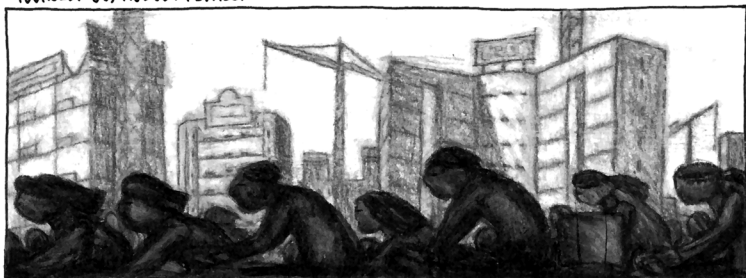
SUNNY DAY VERSION.

A STAY IN CHINA WOULD CONVINCE EVEN THE DIE-HARD SKEPTIC.



RAINY DAY VERSION.

BEFORE REACHING THE HOTEL, THE STREET SLOPES GENTLY FOR A HALF MILE. YOU CAN LET YOURSELF GO; NOBODY PEDALS.



THE VISUAL EFFECT IS DISTURBING SINCE WE'RE ALL STATIONARY BUT MOVING FORWARD.



I GET THE STRANGE IMPRESSION THAT THE STREET ITSELF IS MOVING. IT'S LIKE THE WORLD IS SPINNING UNDER OUR WHEELS WITHOUT MANAGING TO PULL US ALONG.





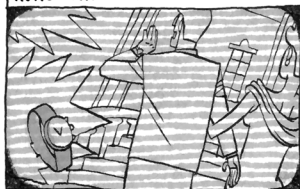
THE TV
PICKS UP
TWO KINDS
OF CHANNELS
...



IF YOU SEE SMILING
WORKERS TALKING TO
JOURNALISTS, IT'S THE
NATIONAL CHANNEL
...



IF YOU'VE GOT A SUPERMODEL AVOIDING
JOURNALISTS AS SHE WALKS DOWN
THE STEPS OF THE OPERA, A SWISS
WATCH ON HER WRIST, IT'S THE
HONG KONG CHANNEL.



ONE GUY AT THE STUDIO WAS
A LIVING CARICATURE OF THE
CHINESE STEREOTYPE,
GLASSES AND ALL.



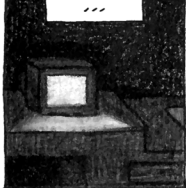
AND SINCE HE REALLY WAS
SHORT, HE WORE HIS HAIR
STRAIGHT UP FOR THE EXTRA
HEIGHT.



ERASERHEAD STYLE.



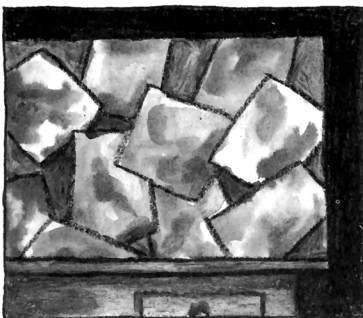
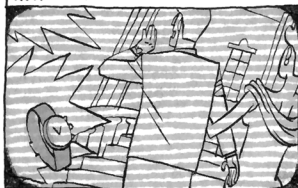
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ERASERHEAD STYLE,

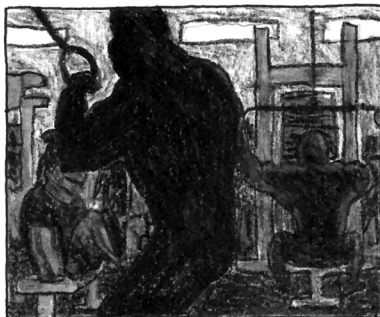




AT THE FRONT DESK, IT TAKES ALL OF FOUR
GIRLS, LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY, TO GET ME
SIGNED UP.

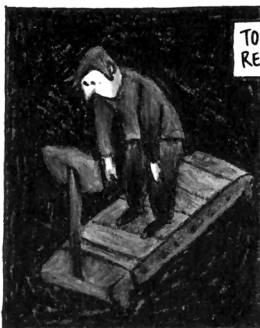


THE WEIGHT ROOM IS
FULL OF PEOPLE.
DAMN, I THOUGHT IT
WOULD BE QUIET. I
DON'T HAVE A CLUE
HOW TO USE THE
EQUIPMENT,
EVEN THOUGH I PEDAL
ALL DAY, I FALL BACK
ON THE BIKES FOR
CREDIBILITY.



AFTER
WATCHING
CAREFULLY,
I TRY THE
TREADMILL

BUT I
CAN'T
GET IT
STARTED!



TO THE
RESCUE.



IT'S ALL
A BIT
SURREAL.

BEFORE LONG I'M TOTALLY EXHAUSTED, BUT I GET A SECOND WIND AND CONTINUE,



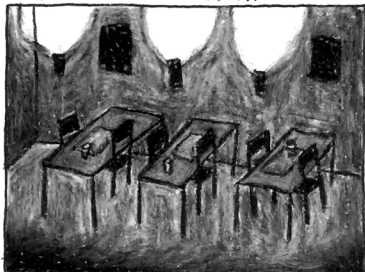
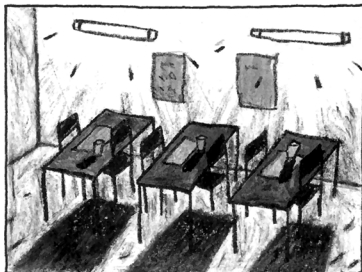
A BIT WILD-EYED, STARING INTENTLY AT A PLANT UP AHEAD THAT, AFTER A FEW



LONG MINUTES, SEEMS TO BE BOUNCING UP AND DOWN AT THE SAME PACE AS ME.



I FIND A TAIWANESE RESTAURANT BY THE GYM. UNLIKE MOST PLACES HERE, IT DOESN'T HAVE THOSE BLOODCURDLING FLUORESCENT LAMPS; THE LIGHTING IS SUBDUED.



THE SERVICE IS EXCELLENT TOO, AND IT COMES WITH A SMILE.



I GO BACK EVERY NIGHT FOR A WEEK.

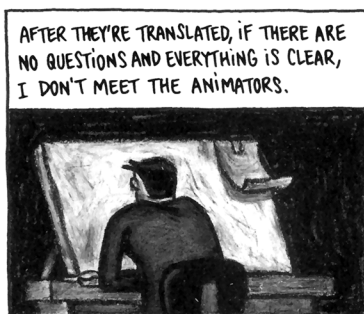
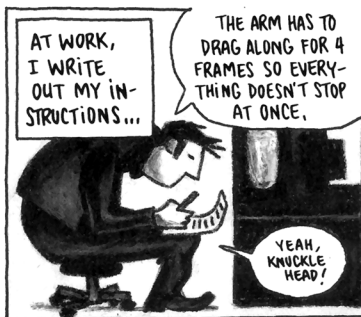
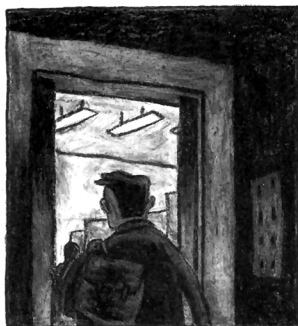


I MEET A LOCAL WHO SPEAKS AN APPROXIMATION OF ENGLISH AND PREDICTABLY HANDS ME HIS BUSINESS CARD.



HIS GERMAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS IMPECCABLE - THE PRODUCT OF YEARS OF STUDY - BUT HE HAS NEVER MET A NATIVE SPEAKER.







IT'S LIKE A MOVIE WHERE YOU HEAR THE PROTAGONIST'S THOUGHTS IN VOICE-OVER.



I NOTICE THAT OLD EXPRESSIONS FROM BACK HOME HAVE STARTED CROPPING UP...





EVEN IF I LEAVE A MESS IN THE MORNING, WHEN I COME BACK, THE ROOM IS JUST LIKE IT WAS BEFORE.



THE WORST IS WHEN MY JEANS COME BACK FROM THE CLEANER'S WITH A CREASE,





I'VE INVITED MY TRANSLATOR
TO LUNCH AT A RESTAURANT
I NOTICED YESTERDAY.



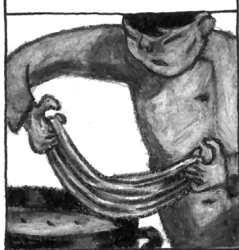
THIS WAY I CAN TRY NEW RESTAURANTS WITHOUT THE KIND
OF NASTY SURPRISE I HAD LAST NIGHT:



TODAY I'M IN FOR A NICE SURPRISE: THE PLACE IS A KIND OF CAFETERIA WITH A COOK FOR EACH
SPECIALTY, AND I CAN ACTUALLY SEE THE FOOD BEFORE EATING IT. WONDERFUL! I COME BACK
OFTEN, AND SOON THE COOKS ALL KNOW ME.



NOODLES ARE MADE EVERY
DAY.





UP AHEAD, WE PASS BY A BILLBOARD I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED ABOUT. I ASK HER WHAT IT SAYS.



I DON'T QUITE GRASP WHAT CRIMES THEY COMMITTED (THEFT? TRAFFICKING?) BUT I DO UNDERSTAND THAT THE ONES MARKED WITH A RED CROSS HAVE ALL BEEN EXECUTED.

ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL SOURCES, THERE WERE AN AVERAGE OF FIVE CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS A DAY IN 1997. THE REAL NUMBERS ARE PROBABLY MUCH HIGHER. THE EXACT NUMBER OF EXECUTIONS IS A STATE SECRET IN CHINA.



IT'S SAID THAT CHINESE AUTHORITIES ARE CYNICAL ENOUGH TO CHARGE FAMILIES THE PRICE OF THE BULLET USED FOR THE EXECUTION.



AS PREDICTED, AN ANIMATOR INVITES ME TO SUPPER AT THE END OF THE DAY...



LUCKILY, MY TRANSLATOR IS ALSO INVITED...

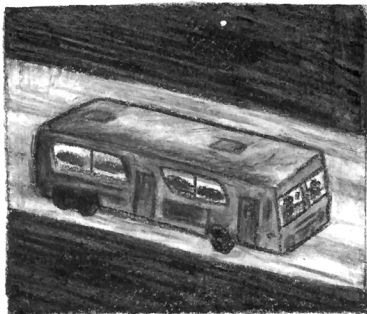


IT WAS EXCELLENT. AFTER THE MEAL, WE WERE SUPPOSED TO STOP BY THE "ENGLISH CORNER": A PLACE WHERE I WOULD BE ABLE TO MEET AND TALK WITH LOCALS.



I EVEN ASKED
THEM — RIGHT
FROM THE
START.

WE'RE OUT OF LUCK. IT'S SHUT.
I WENT BACK A FEW TIMES,
BUT IT WAS NEVER
OPEN.



THE TRANSLATOR HAD TO GO HOME,
SO WE'RE ON OUR OWN...



VERY
FAR
?

OK.

OUR JOURNEY IS NEVER-ENDING. WE'RE IN THE
OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY NOW. THERE ARE NO
STREETLIGHTS... YOU CAN'T SEE MUCH.



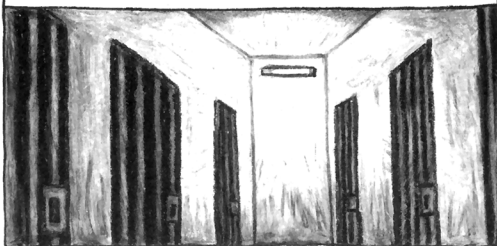
WE GET OFF IN THE
MIDDLE OF A
CONSTRUCTION SITE.



THERE'S A GROUP
OF BUILDINGS,
AND MANY PEOPLE.



HIS APARTMENT IS ON THE FIFTH FLOOR. ALL THE
DOORS HAVE BARS.



SAME HOMEY DETAIL
ON THE
WINDOWS.

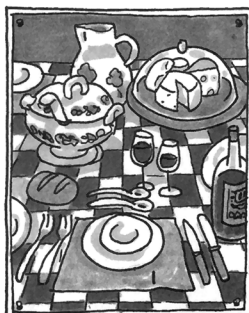


THERE IS NO DECOR. THE HOSPITAL GREEN WALLS ARE NEON-LIT. IT'S TOTALLY BARE EXCEPT FOR A HUGE LEATHER SOFA FACING AN EQUALLY HUGE TELEVISION THAT HE TURNS ON THE MOMENT WE WALK IN.



A STRANGE POSTER IS TACKED OVER THE TV.

IT'S A PHOTOGRAPH OF A FRENCH-STYLE TABLE SETTING, WITH LITTLE PLATES NESTED IN BIGGER ONES, A PORCELAIN TUREEN, SILVER CUTLERY, ETC. — ALL THINGS YOU NEVER SEE HERE... IT MUST SEEM EXOTIC TO HIM.



THE COFFEE LOOKS DUBIOUS. BEING A GOOD HOST, HE MIGHT HAVE OVER-DONE IT.



MUDDY LUMPS FLOAT ON THE SURFACE.



APPREHENSIVE, I TRY A SIP. MY STOMACH CRAMPS UP IMMEDIATELY.

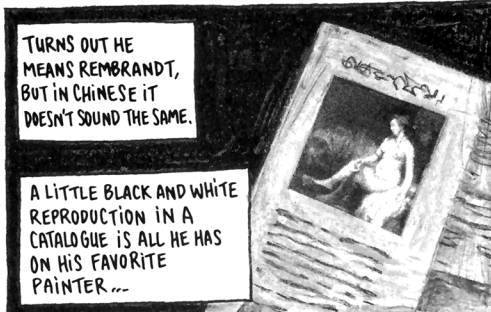


THE NEW-AGE MUSIC PLAYING QUIETLY IN THE BACKGROUND HAS A SOOTHING EFFECT.





HE SHOWS ME PICTURES HE PAINTED BACK WHEN HE TAUGHT FINE ARTS IN BEIJING.



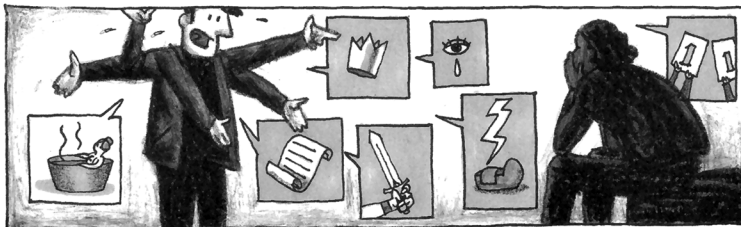
EVEN FOR A FINE ARTS PROFESSOR, FINDING BOOKS WITH FULL COLOR REPRODUCTIONS ISN'T EASY.



WITH CHRISTMAS SETTING THE MOOD, I TELL HIM THE STORY DEPICTED IN HIS FAVORITE PAINTING.



BEAUTIFUL BATHSHEBA HAS JUST STEPPED OUT OF HER BATH AND RECEIVED A MESSAGE SUMMONING HER TO KING DAVID. HER GAZE IS AVERTED; SHE SEEMS LOST IN THOUGHT; SHE LOOKS SAD BECAUSE SHE SENSES MISFORTUNE AHEAD... BUT NO ONE CAN REFUSE A KING.

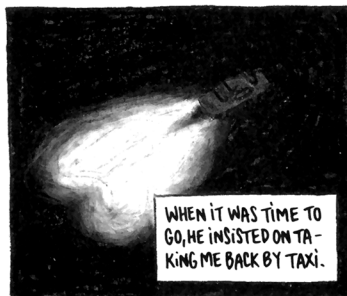


TO MARRY BATHSHEBA, DAVID SENDS HER HUSBAND TO DIE IN BATTLE, AND TO PUNISH THE KING, YAHWEH CAUSES THEIR FIRST CHILD TO DIE ... THAT MAKES THEM EVEN.

IT'S ALWAYS SURPRISING TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN GET ACROSS WITH A DOZEN WORDS AND LOTS OF GESTICULATING.



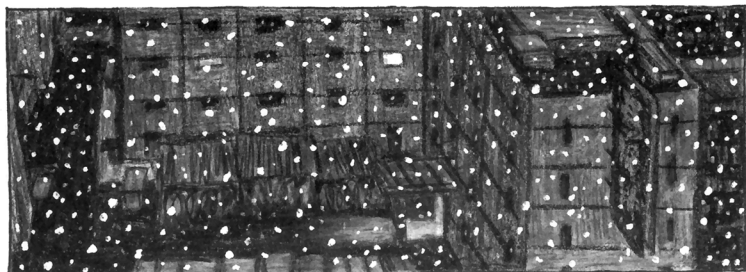
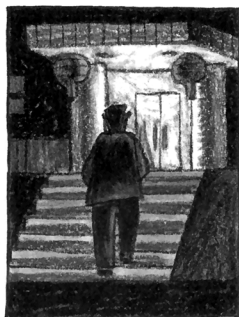
AH! CHRISTMAS MAGIC!



WHEN IT WAS TIME TO GO, HE INSISTED ON TAKING ME BACK BY TAXI.



ALL THAT
ATTENTION
FROM SOMEONE
I HARDLY
KNEW, JUST
SO I COULD
HAVE A
MERRY
CHRISTMAS,
WAS
TOUCHING.

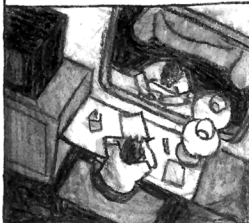


I WONDERED WHETHER THEY'D HAD SNOW BACK HOME FOR CHRISTMAS—I HOPED SO—CHRISTMAS IS ALWAYS NICER WHEN IT SNOWS...

THIS WEEK CRAWLS
ALONG LIKE ALL
THE OTHERS.



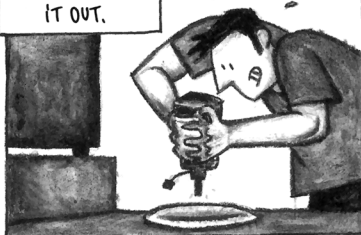
EVENINGS, I DRAW. I HAVE
TO FINISH A STORY FOR
LAPIN NR.17.*



I'M USING REAL INDIA
INK FOR THE FIRST
TIME.



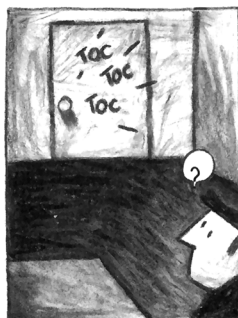
IT'S MUCH TOO
THICK. I CAN
HARDLY SQUEEZE
IT OUT.



STRANGER
STILL, IT'S
PERFUMED.



I CAN'T EVEN
ANSWER BE-
FORE SHE LETS
HERSELF IN
...



THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS PRIVACY
IN A CHINESE HOTEL ROOM...



* FRENCH COMICS ANTHOLOGY PUBLISHED BY L'ASSOCIATION.

ONCE SHE CAME IN WHILE I WAS IN THE SHOWER.



ANOTHER TIME, I CAME BACK FOR SOME PAPERS I HAD FORGOTTEN.



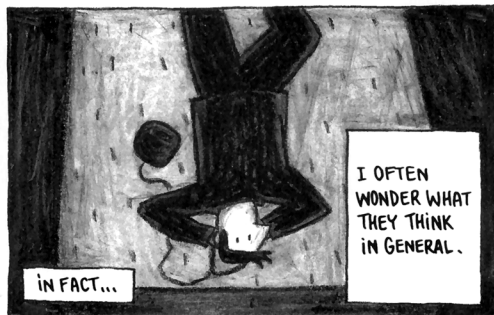
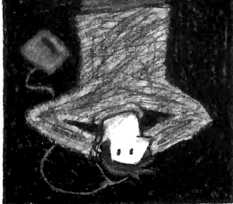
IT'S LIKE THE WIRE ON MY CD PLAYER...



I FIGURED A MOUSE WAS RESPONSIBLE UNTIL I REALIZED THAT THE MAID HAD SINGED IT ON THE LIGHT BULB WHILE CLEANING.



I WONDER WHAT SHE THOUGHT OF THE LATEST PORTISHEAD CD,



I OFTEN WONDER WHAT THEY THINK IN GENERAL.

NEAR SHENZHEN,
THERE'S A TOWN YOU
CAN GET TO BY BUS
THAT'S SUPPOSED TO
HAVE MANY FOREIGNERS.

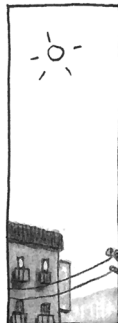


THIS SATURDAY, I'M
DETERMINED TO GO.

I'D BEEN TOLD WHERE TO WAIT AND WHICH
BUS TO TAKE.



ON A SCRAP OF PAPER: MY DESTINATION IN CHINESE.



HERE, THE SUN IS A NUISANCE.



PEOPLE SHIELD THEMSELVES
LIKE IT'S RADIOACTIVE ...



ESPECIALLY
THE GIRLS.





ONE THING'S
SURE: I'M
GOING TO
HONG KONG
NEXT WEEKEND.

AT LEAST
I'LL BE ABLE
TO COMMU-
NICATE
THERE.

WHAT NOW? THERE'S NOTHING TO DO BUT WORK OUT AT THE GYM. I GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS, BUT MY HEART ISN'T IN IT: I CAN'T GET MOTIVATED.



ALL THIS SOPHISTICATED
EQUIPMENT TO WORK UP A
SWEAT IN MUSCLES I'LL
NEVER USE FOR ANY-
THING ELSE.

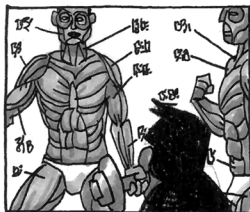


WITH ALL THE
MUSCLES IN
THE HUMAN
BODY...

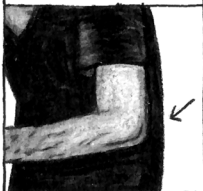
I'M NOT DONE.



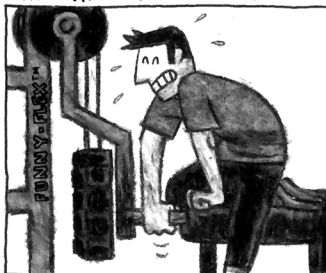
MAYBE I COULD PICK ONE
THAT NOBODY HAS EVER THOUGHT
OF DEVELOPING AND REALLY
FOCUS ON IT...



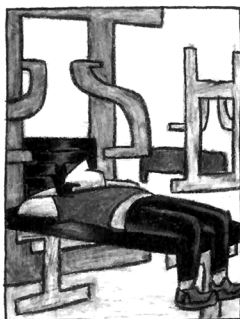
I KNOW: THE FUNNY BONE! WITH A BIT OF EXERCISE, IT MIGHT HURT LESS WHEN IT GETS BUMPED.



THEY SHOULD INVENT A MACHINE THAT WORKS ONLY THE FUNNY BONE.



AFTER TRAINING HARD FOR A FEW WEEKS, I COULD SHOW OFF AT CAFÉS.



IN THE LOCKER ROOM, I CHAT WITH AN AMERICAN WHO HAS BEEN WORKING HERE FOR A FEW MONTHS.



HE'S GOT TO BE THE ONLY MAN IN ALL OF CHINA WHO DOES AEROBICS.



WE END THE EVENING AT A RESTAURANT HE LIKES.





EVEN THOUGH HONG KONG, SINCE REUNIFICATION, IS ONCE AGAIN PART OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM, YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH PASSPORT CONTROLS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER.



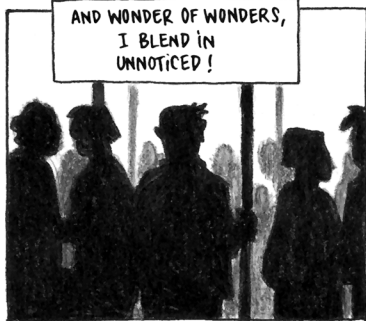
YOU THEN CROSS A NO-MAN'S LAND BY TRAIN FOR OVER AN HOUR TO GET TO THE FIRST SUBWAY STATION IN THE NEW TERRITORIES (NORTH OF HONG KONG).



EVERYTHING IS CLEAN, THE KIDS ARE HIP (THEY WEAR THEIR JEANS LIKE LUCKY LUKE), I CAN READ ALL THE ADS ON THE WALLS... IT'S REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK.



AND WONDER OF WONDERS,
I BLEND IN
UNNOTICED !



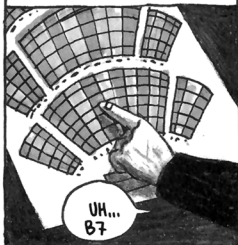
THE WEEKEND IS ALREADY
A TOTAL SUCCESS.



HONG KONG IS SOMETHING LIKE A TROPICAL NEW YORK. THE PACE HERE REMINDS ME OF WESTERN CITIES: THERE ARE CAFÉS, BOOKSHOPS, MOVIE THEATRES, ALL KINDS OF BOUTIQUES, A BOTANICAL GARDEN...



AT THE MOVIES, YOU
CHOOSE YOUR SEAT...



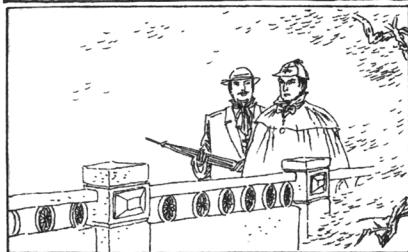
AT THE RECORD SHOP, I BUY A
PASCAL COMELADE CD THAT'S
PLAYING. HE'S HUGE HERE...



IN THE BOUTIQUES,
EVEN THE XL SHIRTS
ARE TOO TIGHT...



IN A BOOKSHOP, I FIND A SHERLOCK HOLMES
ADVENTURE SET IN A KIND OF SINO-LONDON.

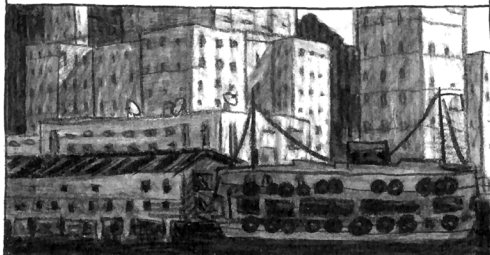


IT'S GREAT TO BE
ABLE TO READ
THE MENU!

HMM...
SPAGHETTI
WITH
MEAT-
BALLS!



I STROLL AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE CITY, A BLISSFUL SMILE
STUCK TO MY FACE.



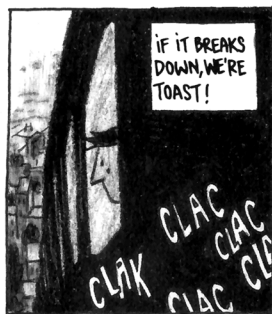
THERE ARE MANY TOURIST
ATTRACTIONS. I DECIDE
TO TAKE A RIDE ON THE
TRAM THAT GOES UP
TO THE ISLAND'S PEAK.



WE CLIMB
STEEPLY AT
ALMOST 45°!



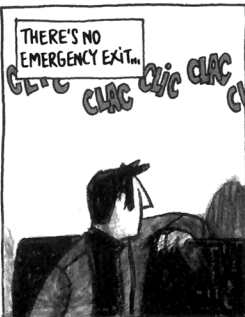
IF IT BREAKS
DOWN, WE'RE
TOAST!



CLAC CLAC CLAC

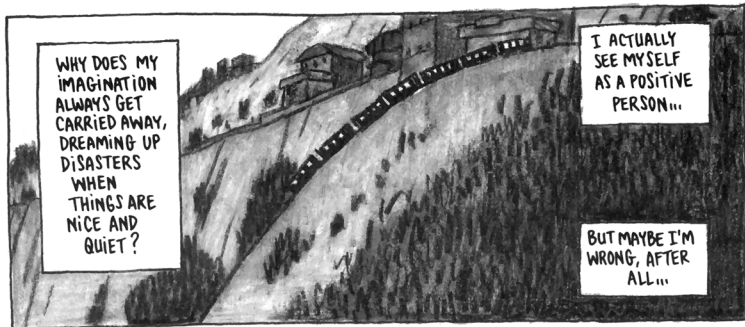
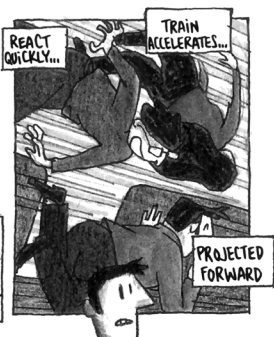
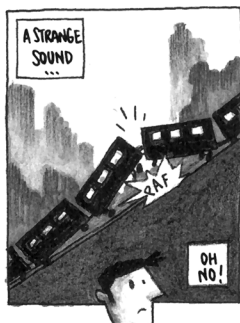


THERE'S NO
EMERGENCY EXIT...



AND THE WINDOWS
DON'T OPEN!





THE PEAK OFFERS GREAT PANORAMIC
VIEWS OF THE CITY.



THE PERFECT
PLACE TO BE
PHOTOGRAPHED.



THERE'S EVEN A GUY WHO DOES JUST THAT.



STRANGELY ENOUGH, HE HAS HIS CLIENTS
POSE AGAINST A BLUE BACKDROP.



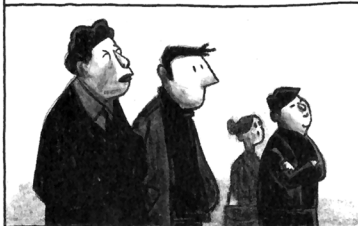
HE THEN USES A COMPUTER TO OVERLAY A
PHOTO OF THE CITY, EVEN THOUGH IT'S
RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM.



NOT QUITE REAL, NOT REALLY
FAKE. A SLIGHT DEVIATION FROM
REALITY. WHAT A CONCEPT!



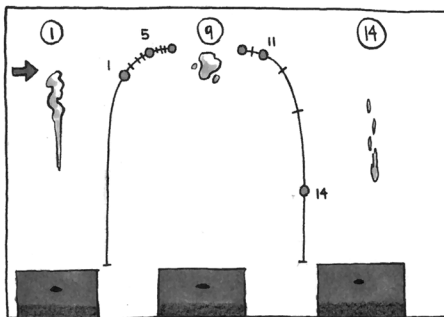
AT THE SUMMIT, THERE'S AN ENTERTAINING
FOUNTAIN THAT SPOUTS JETS OF WATER
IN A REGULAR RHYTHM.



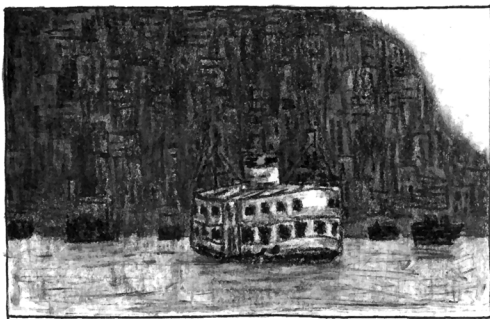
ANIMATOR'S REFLEX: I TRY TO BREAK DOWN
THE MESMERIZING MOVEMENT, WHICH
KEEPS REPEATING ITSELF ...



SURPRISINGLY,
GIVEN THE FORCE
OF THE WATER,
THE FIRST
KEY NEEDS
TO BE
LOCATED
NEAR THE
TOP OF THE
TRAJECTORY.



EVEN IF YOU WATCH CARE-
FULLY, YOU CAN'T SEE THE
WATER EMERGE FROM THE HOLE.



AFTER A NIGHT'S SLEEP, I GO DOWN TO THE PARK NEXT TO THE HOTEL. I FIND A BENCH NEAR A MAGNIFICENT CENTURY-OLD BANYAN TREE AND START TO DRAW IT...



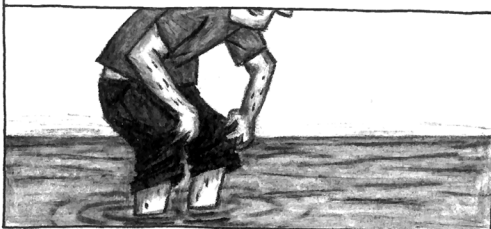
UP AHEAD, ON ANOTHER BENCH, A MAN WITH A MIRROR USES NAIL CLIPPERS TO SHAVE THE FEW HAIRS ON HIS CHIN.



ON HONG KONG
ISLAND, THE
CONCEPT OF
YIN AND YANG
IS A PALPABLE
GEOGRAPHIC
FACT...



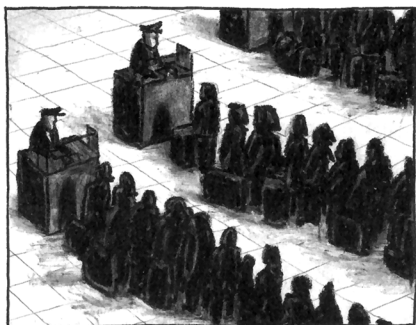
ONE SIDE IS FULL-OUT URBAN WITH ITS SKYSCRAPERS;
THE OTHER, TEN MINUTES BY BUS, HAS BEACHES WITH
SAND TO DIG YOUR TOES INTO.



MMM...
THE SOUND
OF WAVES

if I COULD JUST
FORGET THAT I'M
GOING BACK TO
SHENZHEN IN
LESS THAN AN
HOUR, I MIGHT
EVEN BE ABLE
TO RELAX.

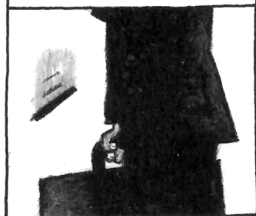




A YOUNG BUSINESSMAN BORROWS
A PEN TO FILL OUT HIS VISA
PAPERS.



AS HE GIVES IT BACK, THE PEN
SLIPS AND FALLS. HE PICKS IT
UP AND HANDS IT TO ME.



OOOPS!
SORRY!

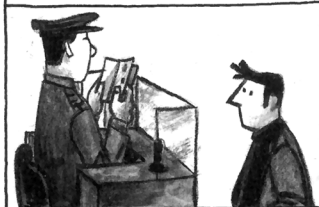


THANK YOU!



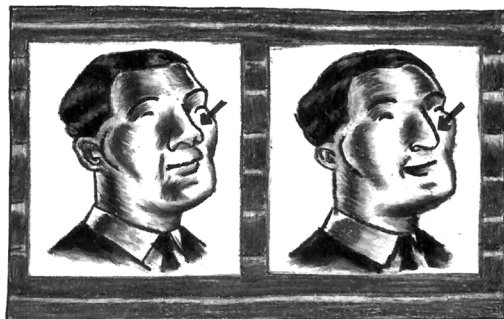
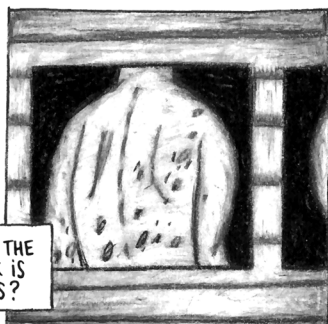
SIX FINGERS!...HE
HAD SIX FINGERS!

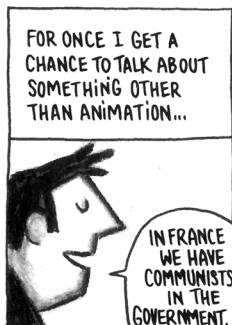
IT LOOKED LIKE A SECOND,
SMALLER THUMB, GRAFTED
ONTO THE FIRST.



COME TO THINK OF IT, BACK HOME YOU'D SAY A
CLUMSY PERSON IS ALL THUMBS...

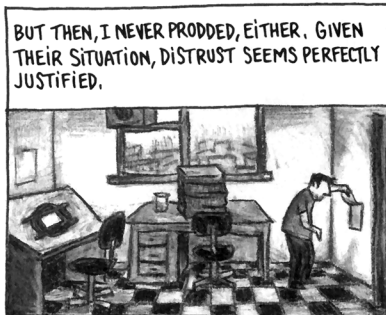
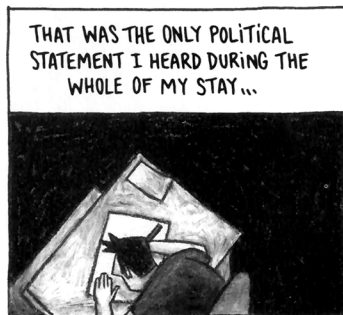




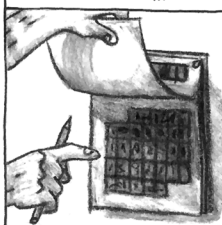


OF COURSE, HE RESPONDS BY LAUGHING ...

IN CHINA, LAUGHTER MASKS A VARIETY OF EMOTIONS THAT ARE DIFFICULT FOR FOREIGNERS TO INTERPRET.



AT THE RATE THAT WE'RE GOING, I DOUBT WE'LL BE ABLE TO WRAP UP THE SERIES BEFORE I LEAVE...



I'M HOPING THEY DON'T ASK ME TO STAY ON...

I RUN INTO MR. LIN AT THE HOT WATER DISPENSER AND GIVE HIM A BOOK ON REMBRANDT I HAD BROUGHT BACK FROM MY WEEKEND IN HONG KONG...



HE SEEMS NEITHER SURPRISED NOR PLEASED, HE JUST SAYS:

THANK YOU!



...AND GETS BACK TO WORK.

NEXT DAY, HE REAPPEARS WITH A BOOK OF SKETCHES FOR ME BY A CHINESE ARTIST I HAD ADMIRER AT HIS PLACE.

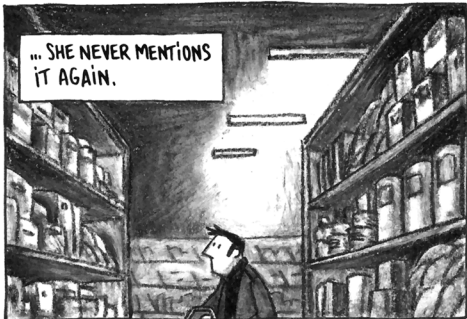


I ALSO GIVE AN ENGLISH NOVEL TO MY TRANSLATOR...

THANK YOU!



... SHE NEVER MENTIONS IT AGAIN.



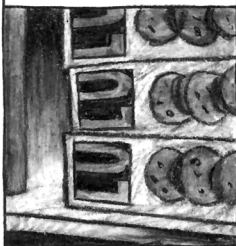
I SPEND MOST OF MY EVENINGS READING,
WORKING OUT AND WANDERING THROUGH
SUPERMARKETS...



THEY'RE A NEW PHENOMENON HERE AND
VERY LUXURIOUS. I SHOP WITH THE
EMERGING BOURGEOISIE.



UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE
TOO MANY WESTERN PRODUCTS.



I DO SOME
RANDOM
TESTING.

MMM...
THATSH
NUMMY!



I'LL
BUY MORE
TOMORROW

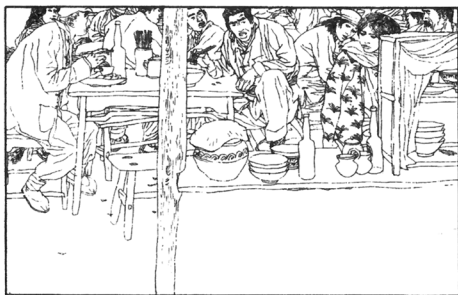
BESIDES WATCHING THE ADS ON LOCAL TV CHANNELS, IT'S
THE MOST EXOTIC THING TO DO HERE.

FOR A WHILE, I TOURED THE BOOK-
SHOPS LOOKING FOR ART BOOKS...
AND FOUND A FEW TREASURES
THAT HOLD A SPECIAL PLACE
ON MY SHELVES.



"TOWN DWELLINGS"

WANG CHI YUN



"IF I WERE THE DISTRICT MAYOR"

HU BUO ZHONG

THE SENSE OF COMPOSITION
IS AMAZING!... EVEN IF
YOU CAN'T READ THE TEXT,
YOU CAN FEEL THE
PRESSURE WEIGHING ON
THE GIRL.



MMM, VERY NICE MOVEMENT...
TOO BAD YOU DON'T GET
GRAPHICS LIKE THESE IN
ANIMATION...

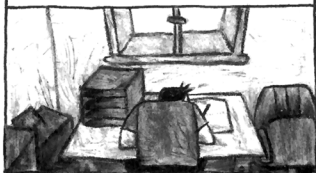


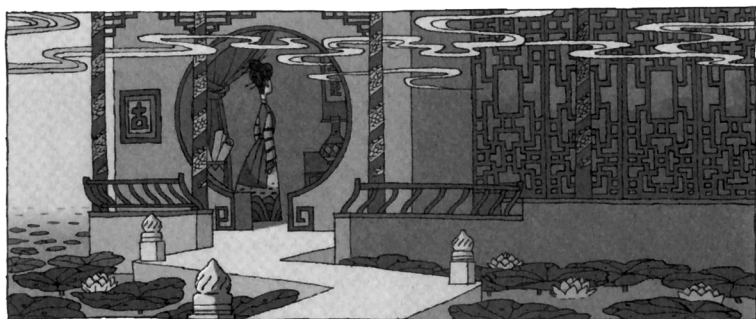
"HAI DEN, MASTER AND MONK"



ANOTHER BOOK OF CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

THIS USE OF CLEAN LINE WAS A BIG
INSPIRATION ON MY FIRST TRIP TO
CHINA ... I EVEN DREW THE FIRST
PAGES OF A BOOK I WANTED TO
DO.





BUT I COULDN'T FIND A PUBLISHER, SO I
LET IT DROP.



SATUR-
DAY ?

YES,
SURE
...

OK
FINE.



CHEUN INVITES ME TO SPEND SATURDAY WITH
HIM AND HIS GIRLFRIEND, WHO STUDIES
ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BEIJING.

I MEANT TO GO BACK TO CANTON
BUT I'D RATHER STAY HERE
AND MEET PEOPLE, JUST TO
HAVE A CHANCE TO TALK.



HM.



AFTER THREE MONTHS OF
BODYBUILDING, MY STOMACH
ISN'T ANY FLATTER ...



IT'S JUST FIRMER,
THAT'S ALL.

I GUESS NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, SOME
BELLIES ARE MADE TO LAST.



I REMEMBER THIS GUY FROM IRELAND...



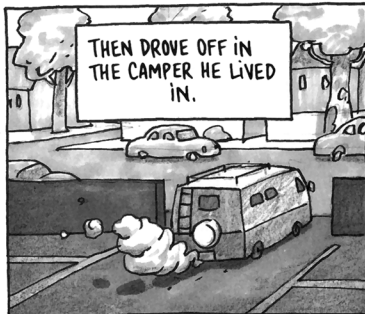


ON A CHART, WE'D CHECK OFF EVERY BEER WE TOOK FROM THE RESERVES.



AT MONTH'S END, THE ACCOUNTANT DEDUCTED THE TOTAL FROM OUR PAYCHECK...

ONE DAY, AN ANIMATOR WHO DIDN'T GET ALONG WITH MANAGEMENT CALLED US ALL OUT INTO THE PARKING LOT.



AT SOME POINT, HE'S TELLING ME WHY BIG MACS TASTE BETTER IN BIG CITIES THAN IN SMALL TOWNS.

TAKE CHICAGO...



BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER THE DETAILS

HEY, SOMEBODY TOOK OUT THE ROTTING PAPER FROM UNDER THE GLASS...

TOO BAD

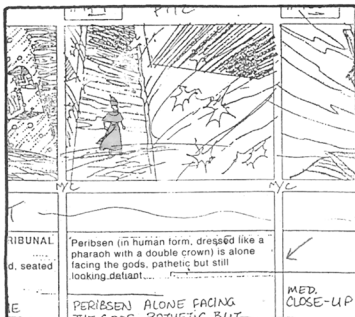


TODAY, THERE ARE ONLY TWO DECENT SEQUENCES; THE REST ARE BAD...



SOME DAYS ARE LIKE THAT.

BUT THEN A SCENE IN THE LATEST STORYBOARD CHEERS ME UP.



"PATHETIC BUT STILL LOOKING DEFIANT" HA HA HA! IT'S PAPHYRUS MEETS BERGMAN! ... AND ALL THAT IN 50 IMAGES (2 SECONDS) USING A 12-FIELD FRAME. HA HA!



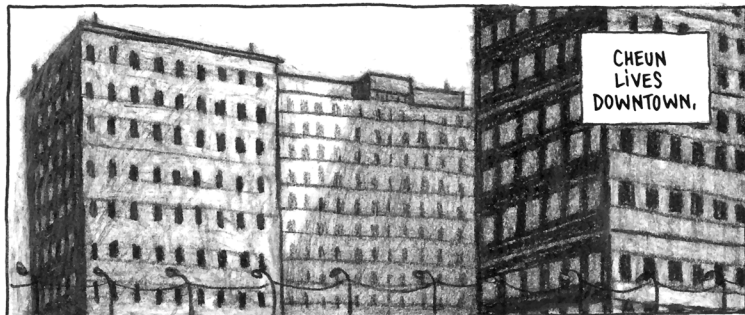
I GET A CALL
FROM PARIS.
THERE ARE TWO
EPISODES LEFT
TO SUPERVISE,
BUT THEY'LL
MANAGE BY FAX
AND PHONE. I
WON'T HAVE TO
EXTEND MY STAY!

OH...
OKAY.

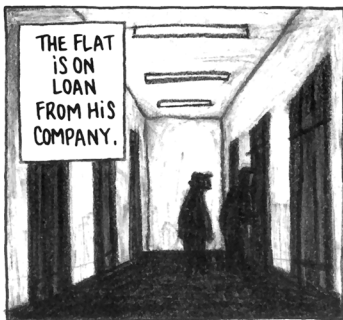


HUH!

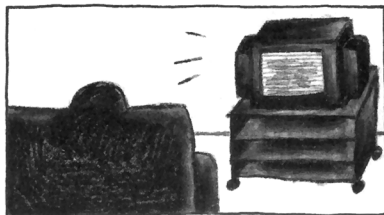
THOSE LAST TWO EPISODES
ARE GOING TO BE HELL.



THE FLAT
IS ON
LOAN
FROM HIS
COMPANY.

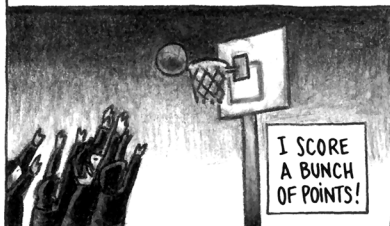


IT'S UNDECORATED; THE WALLS ARE ALL WHITE.
IN THE LIVING ROOM, A HUGE BLACK LEATHER
SOFA FACES A TV VCR WITH SPEAKERS.





PEOPLE JOIN US AND WE HAVE A LITTLE GAME. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, I'M THE TALLEST PERSON ON THE COURT.



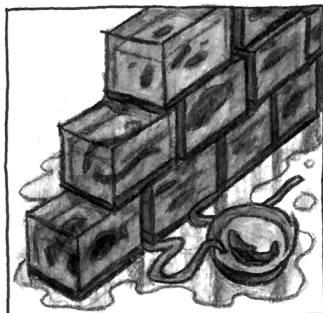
THEN BACK INSIDE FOR MORE TV WITH HIS MUTE GIRLFRIEND.



TO PLEASE ME, CHEUN WANTS TO TREAT ME TO WESTERN FOOD: STEAK, HAMBURGER, FRIES, ETC. ...



LUCKILY, I MANAGE TO REDIRECT HIS PLANS BY SAYING I WANT TO EAT FISH.



I'M INVITED TO DELIVER THE LAST RITES.

UH... LET'S SEE... THAT ONE, THE BIG ONE!

AND THE ONE THAT'S TRYING TO HIDE THERE, TOO!



THE WAITER RETURNS WITH TWO GLASSES. THE FIRST HAS A BIT OF ALCOHOL MIXED WITH SNAKE BLOOD.



IT DOESN'T LOOK APPETIZING, BUT IT GOES DOWN.



"VERY APHRODISIAC," CHEUN TELLS ME.



* FRENCH EXPRESSION: "FAT LOT OF GOOD THAT'LL DO ME."

A PIECE OF SNAKE ENTRAILS (THE BLADDER, I THINK) IS FLOATING IN THE SECOND GLASS.



CHEUN MASHES IT WITH HIS SPOON. A GREEN LIQUID LEAKS OUT, GIVING THE CONTENTS A NICE ABSINTHE COLOR.



THIS ONE IS VERY GOOD FOR THE CIRCULATION, I'M TOLD.



THE TASTE, THOUGH, IS REVOLTING. IT'S ONE OF THE FEW FOODS I DIDN'T ENJOY IN CHINA.



BUT EATING REMAINED THE BIGGEST PLEASURE OF MY STAY.



AFTER THE MEAL, THEY TAKE
ME BACK TO THE HOTEL.



HIS GIRLFRIEND HADN'T SAID
A DOZEN WORDS ALL NIGHT.

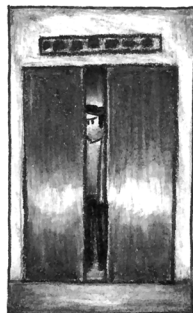


HEY! I
OPENED
THE DOOR
ON MY OWN!

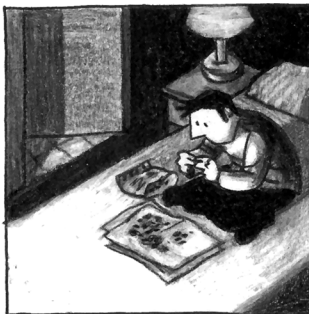


IN THREE
MONTHS,
I'VE NEVER
TOUCHED
THAT
KNOB!

COLONIAL
REFLEXES KICK
IN AND I THINK:
"WHERE'S THE
DOORMAN? HE'S
NOT DOING
HIS JOB..."



ONE MORE WEEK...
IT'S TIME TO GO:
I'M PICKING
UP BAD HABITS.



THAT NIGHT,
WATCHING A
FRESHLY PIRATED
FILM PLAYING ON
THE HOTEL'S CLOSED
CIRCUIT TV, I
EAT A WHOLE
BAG OF SOUR-
TASTING SEEDS.

IT'S THE LATEST JAMES BOND. THE FILM WAS TAPED IN A MOVIE THEATRE USING A CAM-CORDER... YOU CAN SEE THE HEADS OF THE PEOPLE IN THE FRONT ROW AND HEAR THEM LAUGHING.



AT ONE POINT, THE CAMERA TILTS TO ONE SIDE.



NEXT DAY, MY LIPS ARE SWOLLEN AND MY TONGUE IS TINGLING.



I THOUGHT I WAS PROPERLY PREPARED.



I HAD KEPT MY OLD TICKET, I HAD CHECKED THE SCHEDULE. I'D EVEN COME BACK TO FIND THE WICKET FOR THE TRAIN TO CANTON.



BUT TODAY, IT'S SHUT.



I TRY TO GET INFORMATION
OUT OF A COP.



HE GIVES
ME VAGUE
DIRECTIONS...

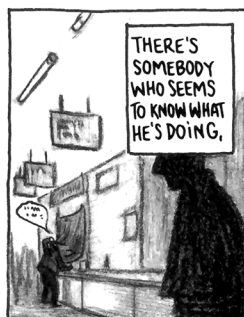
THERE?
STRAIGHT AHEAD?
TO THE LEFT? WHERE?



I TRY ANOTHER
WICKET AT RANDOM...



THIS IS ABSURD. ALL I WANTED
WAS TO SPEND MY LAST WEEK-
END IN CANTON.



IN CANTON, I GET OUT AT THE YOUTH HOSTEL.



IT'S GOT SINGLE ROOMS THAT AREN'T EXPENSIVE.

ON THE DOOR, THE USUAL RULES: THERE'S A \$6 FINE FOR LIGHTING FIREWORKS IN THE ROOM, AND RADIOACTIVE WEAPONS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE HOSTEL.



HM. ONLY \$6...! THAT'S ALMOST TEMPTING.

THE HOSTEL IS LOCATED IN THE FORMER EUROPEAN ENCLAVE. SET BACK FROM THE CITY HUBBUB, IT'S THE PERFECT PLACE FOR A QUIET STROLL.



I'M QUICKLY ACCOSTED BY A CHINESE STUDENT.



HE OFFERS TO JOIN ME SO WE CAN GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER. I'M NOT SURE... HE SPEAKS ENGLISH LIKE A SPANISH COW!





TO MAKE OUT A FEW FAMILIAR SOUNDS AND WORDS, I HAVE TO PAY CONSTANT ATTENTION AND MAKE HIM REPEAT EVERY SENTENCE AT LEAST THREE TIMES.



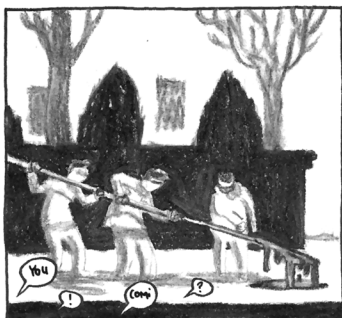
IT SOON GETS TIRING.

I TRY TO SHAKE HIM BY STOPPING FOR A MEAL.

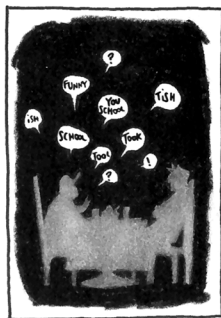


THE FOOD IS EXCELLENT.

AFTER A WHILE, MY ATTENTION STRAYS AND I WATCH TWO WORKERS BEHIND MY TALKATIVE COMPANION, UNBLOCKING SEWER DRAINS WITH A BAMBOO STICK.



I SUDDENLY REALIZE THEY'RE NOT WORKERS AT ALL, BUT TWO COOKS FROM THE RESTAURANT.





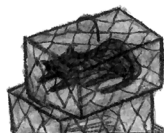
AND YET HE HARDLY LISTENS TO
WHAT I SAY. I'VE BEEN
ANSWERING IN FRENCH
FOR A WHILE AND HE DOESN'T
SEEM TO NOTICE.



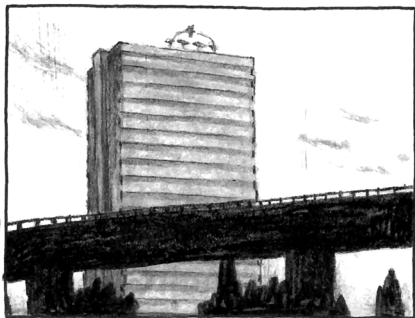
I COME ACROSS THE SACRÉ
CŒUR CATHEDRAL, LOST IN
A LABYRINTH OF ALLEYS...



THE MARKETS SELL
JUST ABOUT
EVERYTHING THAT
MOVES
...
CATS, FOR
INSTANCE



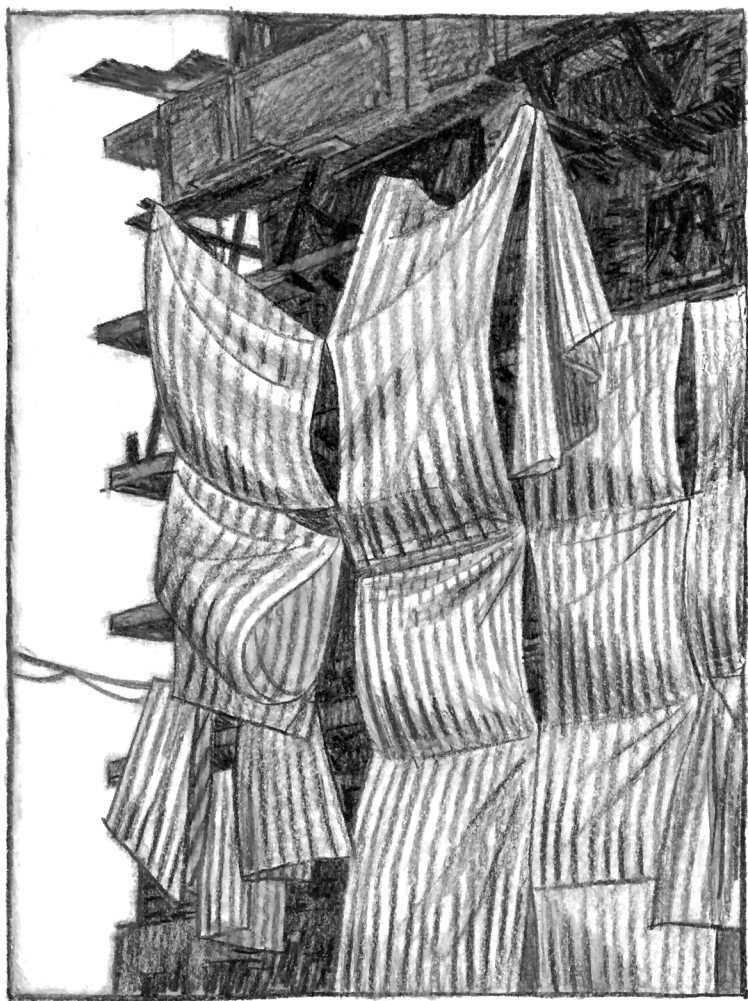
HA
HA
HA



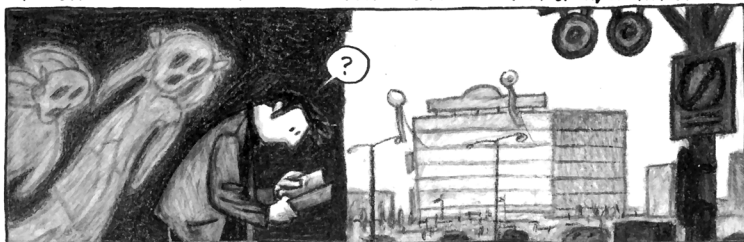
PASSING BY A FANCY RESTAURANT, I SEE
AN OSTRICH IN THE KITCHEN.



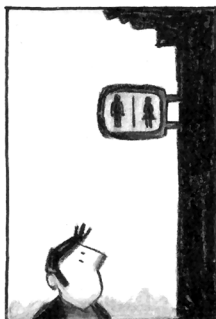
HOW'S THE
OSTRICH...IS
IT FRESH?



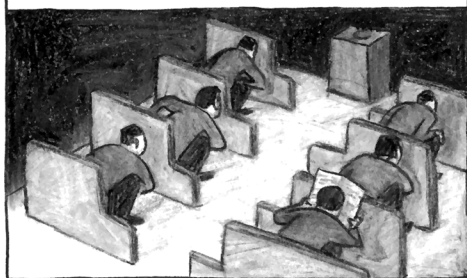
I LOOK (UNSUCCESSFULLY) BEHIND THE FRIENDSHIP STORE FOR A CHRISTIAN CEMETERY,
THE SUPPOSED BURIAL SITE OF A NUMBER OF GIRLS KILLED BY CANADIAN NUNS.



PROPAGANDA? I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING MORE INOFFENSIVE THAN A CANADIAN NUN.

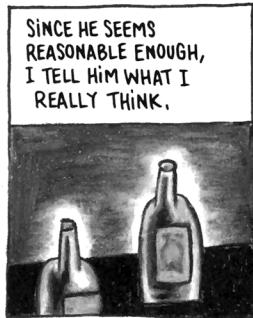


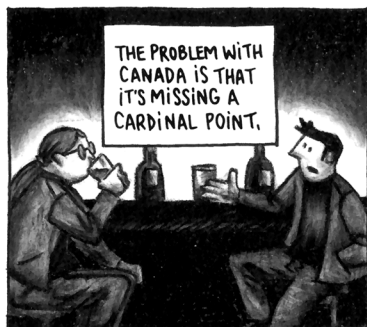
IN THE PUBLIC TOILETS, THE MOOD IS CONTEMPLATIVE.



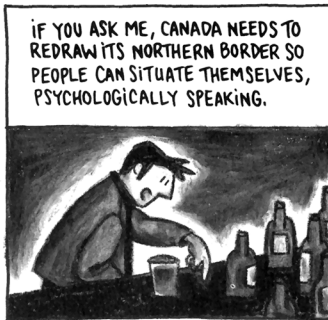
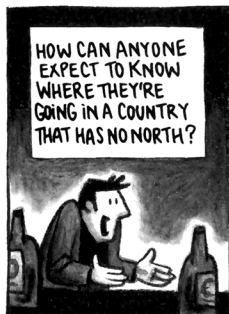
BY WAY OF AN ALTAR,
THERE'S A SINK. I
CLEANSE MY HANDS.





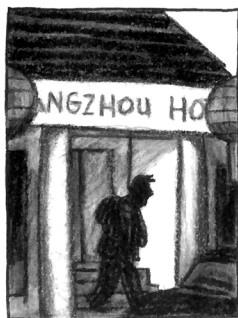


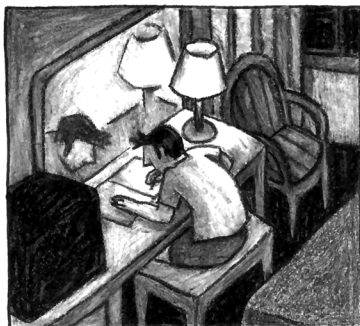
HUDSON BAY? THE NORTH WEST TERRITORIES? THE ARCTIC CIRCLE? BAFFIN ISLAND? AFTER THAT, IT'S ALL ICE. YOU CAN'T EVEN TELL IF THERE'S GROUND UNDERFOOT!





I HEAD BACK,
PRETTY LIT, AND
STOP FOR A LONG
TIME TO ADMIRE
THE BANYANS THAT
LINE THE STREET,
BLENDING INTO THE
WARM EVENING
HAZE IN THE
DISTANCE.





IF ONLY THE
STUDIO HAD BEEN
IN CANTON,
MY STAY WOULD
HAVE BEEN A
WHOLE OTHER
STORY. IT'S A
CITY I THINK
I COULD HAVE
GROWN
ATTACHED TO.



TODAY, THE BOSS IS
INVITING ME OUT
TO LUNCH. HE'S
LEAVING FOR THE WEEK
AND WANTS TO THANK
ME FOR MY WORK.



HE'S A TALL MAN, QUITE ELEGANT.
HE GETS ALONG WELL WITH HIS
EMPLOYEES EVEN THOUGH, TO HEAR
THEM TELL IT, HE'S A LOUSY
MANAGER.



BUT HE MUST BE ENTERTAIN-
ING. PEOPLE LISTEN WHEN
HE TALKS AND LAUGHTER
REGULARLY BREAKS OUT
AROUND HIM.



NEEDLESS TO
SAY, I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
A WORD...
I CAN ONLY
GRASP THE
FORM: THE
RHYTHM,
INTONATION,
PAUSES,
ETC...



AND STRANGELY ENOUGH,
I'M JUST ABOUT LAUGHING
MYSELF.



IT'S A PLEASURE TO HEAR HIM TELL A STORY: THE RISING TENSION, THE PERFECTLY TIMED SILENCE THAT LEAVES THE LISTENER HANGING AND THE PUNCH LINE THAT DROPS CLEAN

...



DESPITE THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES THAT SEPARATE EAST AND WEST, I THINK WE SHARE THE SAME NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES WHEN IT COMES TO SPOKEN LANGUAGE.



THAT MAKES ONE THING WE HAVE IN COMMON,

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CHINESE HUMOR, I CONVINCE AN ANIMATOR TO TELL ME A JOKE...



A WEALTHY MANDARIN THREW A PARTY AND BOASTED THAT HE COULD GIVE HIS GUESTS EVERYTHING BUT THE MOON.

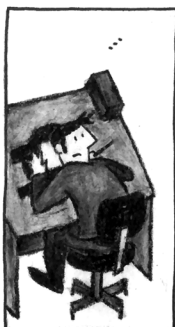


SUDDENLY A SERVANT CAME IN TO SAY THERE WASN'T ENOUGH WOOD FOR THE FIRE.



AND SO THE MANDARIN SAID: "EVERYTHING BUT THE MOON AND FIREWOOD."





PUSH THE SIMILARITY TO THE EXTREME IN ORDER TO GET TWO DAYS THAT ARE PERFECTLY IDENTICAL.



THE GOAL IS TO SEE IF IDENTICAL CONTEXTS PRODUCE IDENTICAL THOUGHTS.



ARTISTS WHO INK THEIR OWN PENCILS KNOW THE FEELING...



GOING OVER THE SAME LINES, THE SAME THOUGHTS RESURFACE.



IN THE END, IT DOESN'T WORK...

THOUGHTS JUST AREN'T THAT EASY TO KEEP UNDER CONTROL.

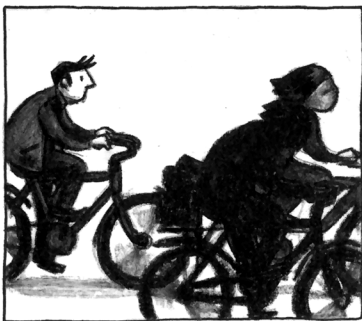
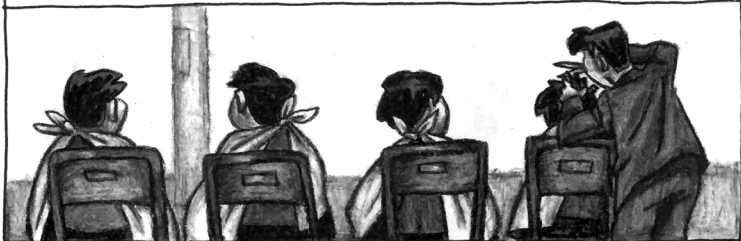


IT FIGURES ...
OH WELL. AT LEAST THAT MAKES ONE DAY LESS LEFT TO GO.

MORNINGS, I WALK ALONG A STREET WHERE PEOPLE LAY OUT THEIR DIPLOMAS, WAITING FOR JOB OFFERS.



EVENINGS, THEY'RE OFTEN REPLACED BY A BARBER WHO GIVES WORKERS FROM A CONSTRUCTION SITE NEXT DOOR A TRIM, ONE AFTER THE OTHER.



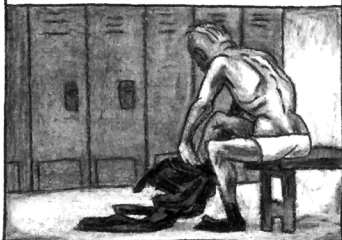
THE POWER IS OUT AT THE GYM. THE CLIENTS LEAVE, DISAPPOINTED...



I INSIST ON GOING UP. IT'S STILL LIGHT OUT
AND AFTER ALL, THE MACHINES WORK ON
MUSCLE POWER...



IN THE LOCKER ROOM, I COME ACROSS
A STRANGELY SHAPED OLD MAN.



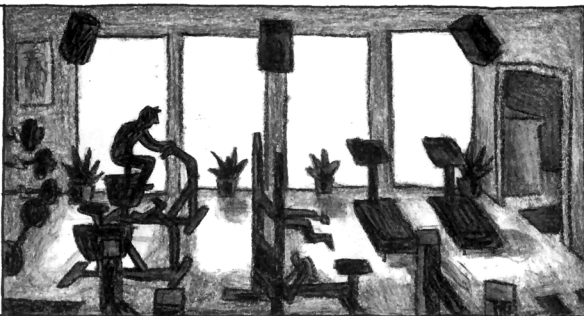
JUST LIKE A RING CAN DEFORM A
FINGER WITH TIME, HIS BELT SEEMS
TO HAVE DUG A HOLLOW INTO HIS
WAIST OVER THE YEARS.



MAKES YOU WONDER IF
WE ADJUST TO OUR
CLOTHES MORE THAN
THEY DO TO US.

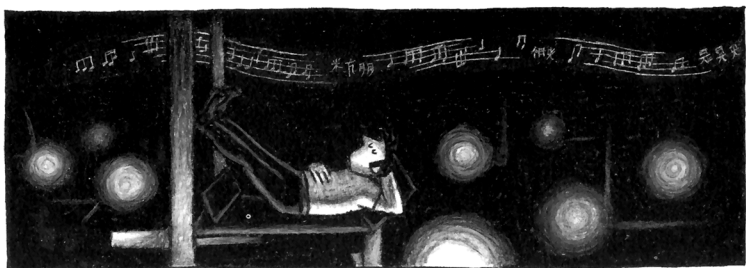


I'M ON MY OWN,
AND IT'S NOT
UNPLEASANT.
ESPECIALLY
SINCE I DON'T
HAVE TO LISTEN
TO WHITNEY
HOUSTON YOWL
THROUGH THE SPEA-
KERS IN A NEVER-
ENDING LOOP...





NIGHT FALLS SLOWLY, AND THE GUY WHO USUALLY MANAGES THE JUICE BAR SETS OUT DOZENS OF CANDLES IN THE GYM,

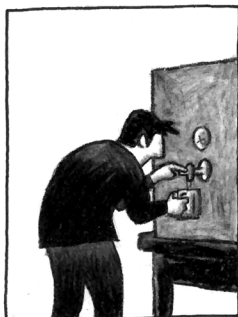


AND TO ADD TO THE MAGIC OF THIS UNFORGETTABLE MOMENT, I HEAR HIM IN A ROOM NEXT DOOR, SINGING A LITING SONG THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S OUT OF A FAIRYTALE.

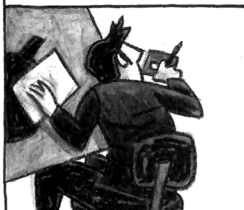
IF I DRAW
ALL THESE
ANECDOTES
ONE DAY,
IT WILL
PROBABLY
LOOK LIKE
I HAD A
GREAT TIME
HERE.

TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT,
EVEN BOREDOM CAN
PROBABLY SUBLIMATE
ITSELF AND SEEM
ENTERTAINING ...

IT'S A
BIT
LIKE
MEMORY.



THE LAST DAY IS QUIET.
THERE'S NOT MUCH TO
DO.



AND LIKE EVERY FRIDAY,
MY TRANSLATOR COMES
TO ASK:

YOU COME
TO WORK
TOMORROW?



I EXPLAIN THAT I'M
GOING TO HONGKONG TOMOR-
ROW TO CATCH MY FLIGHT.

BACK TO
CANADA!

NO, I LIVE IN
FRANCE NOW.



OH! YOU LIVE
IN FRANCE!

I LOVE
FRANCE!

YOU KNOW
I SPEAK "UN
PEU FRANÇAIS".



IN OUR LAST HALF HOUR
TOGETHER, WE GET TO
KNOW EACH OTHER.

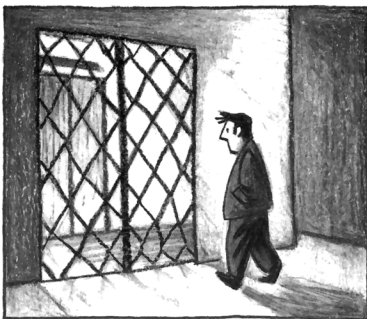
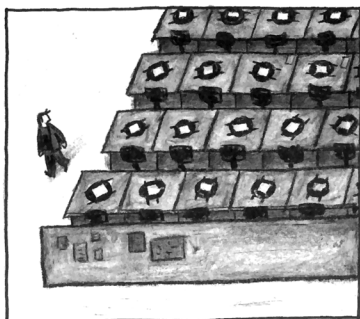
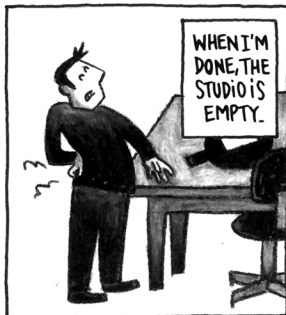
BUT ON HER WAY OUT,
SHE LEAVES A WAIST-
HIGH PILE OF SEQUENCES
FOR ME TO CHECK.

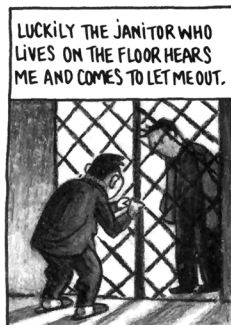
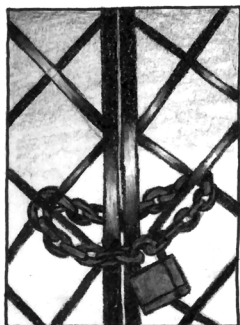


I
WORK
INTO THE
NIGHT.

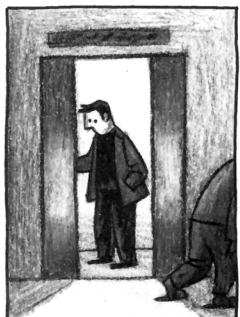


WHEN I'M
DONE, THE
STUDIO IS
EMPTY.

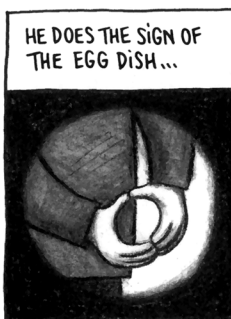




LUCKILY THE JANITOR WHO LIVES ON THE FLOOR HEARS ME AND COMES TO LET ME OUT.

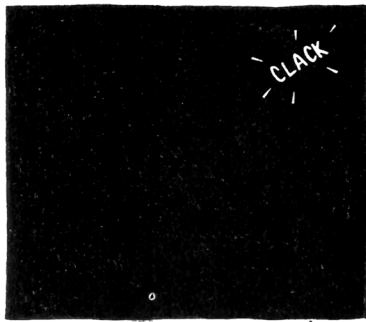
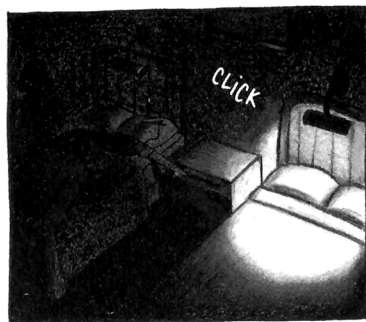
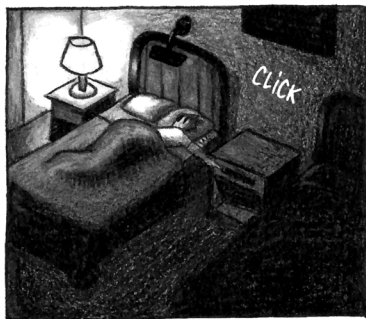


ON THE 3RD FLOOR, THE COOK FROM THE RESTAURANT STEPS IN AND SMILES AT ME...



HE DOES THE SIGN OF THE EGG DISH...





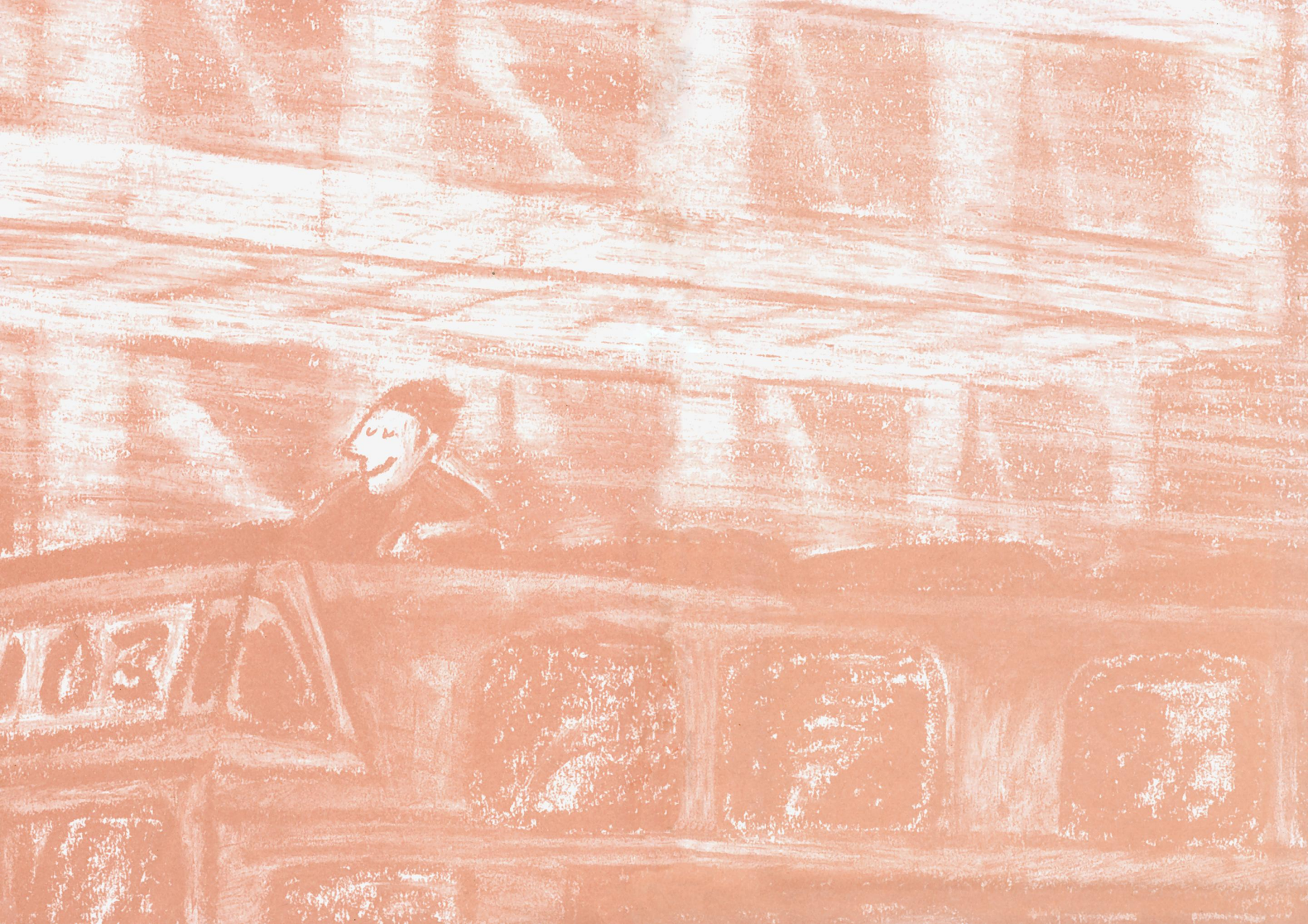
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